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HANDLEY CROSS;

OR,

THE SPA HUNT.

A Sporting Tale.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JORROCKS' JAUNTS AND JOLLITIES," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1843.

TO

M. F. H.s

AND

EX-M. F. H.s

TO

MASTERS OF STAGGERS

AND

MASTERS OF MUGGERS,

TO

SPA FREQUENTERS,

(SAINTS AS WELL AS SINNERS,

DANCERS AS WELL AS DRINKERS),

TO

SPORTSMEN

AND

WOULD-BE SPORTSMEN,

(COCKNEYS AS WELL AS COUNTRYMEN),

AND TO

INGENUOUS YOUTH GENERALLY,

These Volumes

ARE INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

The outline of the following tale — for novel it does not pretend to be — appeared in a sporting periodical, from whence it was freely copied in this country and reprinted in America. That, with the "laborious lassitude" of a protracted snow-storm, induced the author to try if he could make any thing better of it,—and behold the result!

It is odd that, though we have knocked off these three volumes (which, by the way, contain as much as four or five, ordinary measure) with ease and rapidity, we feel rather bothered about this paltry Preface ;* but, as we have something to say, here goes.

* A Preface is always printed, or generally written, last.

That *real* critic, the publisher, as the delectable author of "Cecil" calls him, approved of the work in manuscript, but objected to the title "Handley Cross; or, the Spa Hunt," on the ground that it would be taken for a mere fashionable, watering-place tale, and wished to substitute that of "THE FOX-HUNTER" for it.

The author stood out (right or wrong, the reader will be better able to judge when he gets through the third volume), and his reasons were, that there is no "fox-hunter," *par excellence*, in the work, and such a title would deter lady-readers from looking at it. But while the author feels that the work is not open to the objection taken by Mr. Colburn, he is by no means so sure that an opposite one may not prevail, viz., that it is not sufficiently "*genteel*." (O, that horrid word, we should like to knock it on the head!)

Once for all, then, let us state that it is *not* a genteel work—not one of your Lord Jeems (James), silver-fork school of writing—but a mere tale of ordinary, tradesman-like

sporting life, with scarcely a titled personage in it.

Having let the reader into one secret of the "prison-house," we will disclose a little more, and then to the book or not, as he may.

"Prune down a little of the old fox-hunting grocer's coarseness," said the publisher.

"Prune down a little of the old fox-hunting grocer's coarseness!" repeated we; "what, make old Jorrocks a gentleman? Impossible! The man's a real character, and his friends wouldn't know him. Call him Lord *Jee*ms Jorrocks, if you like, and start him afresh, but don't convert honest old John into a bag-wigged, bowing courtier.—'If from high life high characters are drawn,' from what class would you draw common life?"

Mr. Colburn was silent.

Reader! gentle—or *genteel* reader! a word with you. Don't turn up your nose at old J. because he's "wulgar."

We think that is about all we have got to say. We might have observed upon the

overgrown establishments of modern times for the enjoyment of that sport of which the boast of every man is that his co-follower "knows nothing," and commented upon the influence reporting and the love of notoriety have had in making them so; but Peel, we think, will cure the one, and the other will cure itself. So now, Reader, there's the whistle! take your book, jump into the train and whisk away!

Hoddesdon, Nov. 1842.

HANDLEY CROSS;

OR, THE

SPA HUNT.

CHAPTER I.

"I respect hunting in whatever shape it appears; it is a manly and a wholesome exercise, and seems by nature designed to be the amusement of the Briton."—BECKFORD.

When Michael Hardey died, great was the difficulty in the Vale of Sheepwash to devise how the farmers' hunt was to be carried on. Michael, a venerable sportsman of the old school, had long been at the head of affairs, and without paying all expenses, had enjoyed an uninterrupted sway over the pack and country.

The hounds at first were of that primitive sort, upon which modern sportsmen look down with contempt. Few in number, uneven in size, and ill-matched in speed, they were trencher-fed* all

* Unkenneled, or kept at farm-houses and cottages.

the year round, and upon any particular morning that was fixed on for a hunt, each man might be seen wending his way to the meet followed by his dog, or bringing him along in a string.

> "There was Invincible Tom, and Invincible Towler,
> Invincible Jack, and Invincible Jowler."

Day would hardly have dawned ere the long-poled sportsmen assembled with their hounds. Then they would trail up to puss. Tipler would give the first intimation of her erratic wanderings o'er the dewy mead. Then it was, "well done Tipler! O, what a dog he is!" Then Mountain would throw his tongue, and flinging a pace or two in advance, would assume the lead. "Well done, Mountain! Mountain for ever"—would be the cry. Tapster next would give a long drawn howl, as if in confirmation of his comrades doings in front, and receive in turn the plaudits of his master. Thus they would unravel the gordian knot of puss's wanderings.

* * * * *

Other foot-people try the turnips, cross the stubbles, and beat the hedges.

Yon tuft upon the rising ground seems likely for her form. Aye, Tipler points towards it. Giles Jolter's hand is raised to signal invincible Towler, but half the pack rush towards him, and Jolter kicks puss out of her form to save her from

their jaws. "*Hoop! Hoop! Hoop!* There she goes!" What a panic ensues! Puss lays her long ears upon her back, and starts for the hill with the fleetness of the wind. The pack with more noise than speed, strain every nerve, and the further they go the further they are left behind. The hare crosses over the summit of the hill, and the hounds are reduced to their noses for the line. "Now, Mountain! Now, Tipler! Now, Bonnets-o'-blue. Oh, what dogs they are!"

* * * * *

Puff, puff, puff, go the sportsmen, running and rolling after their darlings, with little leisure for shouting. Then, having gained the summit of the hill, the panting pedestrians would stand lost in admiration at the doings of their favourites down below, while the more active follow in their wake, trusting to a check to let them in. When a check ensued how bipeds and quadrupeds worked! While the latter were sniffling about, going over the same ground half a dozen times, the former would call their hounds to them, and either by pricking or lifting over difficult ground contrive to give them a lead. The hunt is up again, and away they all go. The hounds strain over the grass, dash through the furze, making the spinney resound with their cry, and enter upon the fallow beyond. Mountain alone speaks to

the scent, and hill re-echoes his voice.—Now he's silent.—She's squatted.

The prickers are at work again, trying each furrow, and taking the rigs across. How close she lies!

* * * * *

"*Hoop!*" She jumps up in the middle of the pack, and Mountain gets a mouthful of fur. That was a close shave!—too close to be pleasant. The hill people view her, and now every move of puss and the pack is eagerly watched. "That's right! that's right! over the stubble. Tipler's just going her very line. Ah, he's taken up the hedge instead of down, and Mountain has it. Now, Mountain, my man!"

She runs round the sheep, but Mountain hits her off beyond. Now she doubles and springs back, but they work through the problem, and again puss has nothing to trust to but her speed. Her strength begins to fail. She makes a grand effort, and again leaves her pursuers in the lurch. Slow and sure they ring her funeral knell after her, each note striking terror into her breast, as she pricks her long ears and sits listening.

She nears her own haunt but dare not enter. The hill-people descend to join the tussle at the end. Poor puss! her large bright eyes are ready to start out of her head. Her clean brown fur is

clotted and begrimed, and her strength is all but exhausted. Another view!

"Poor, is the triumph o'er the timid hare."

Now what a noise of men and hounds as they view her again. It is a last chance. She passes into the next grass field, and a friendly hedge conceals her from their view. She steals up the furrow, and reaches the wall at the high end. It is high and loose, and a few stones are out in the middle. Puss jumps in.*

* * * * *

Up come the hounds. Mountain and Tipler, and Gamester, and Bonnets-o'-blue, Merryman and Ferryman, and then a long tail, yelping, yapping, puffing, and blowing.

Over they go into the lane. Now up, now down, now backwards, now forwards, now round about, but no puss.

* * * * *

Up come the field. "Now, Mountain, my man, hit her off!" cries his master, vaulting over the wall, and stooping to prick the hare on the road. But no prints are there.

"She must have flown!" observes one.

"Or sunk into the ground," says another.

"Or yon tinker man's knocked her on the

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* The manœuvres of a hunted hare are truly astonishing.—The author witnessed the above.

head," observes a third, pointing to a gipsy camp at the cross roads, and away they all go to demand the body of puss.

* * * * *

The tinker man shows fight on having his cauldron searched, and several stout wenches emerging from the tattered cart-awning, a battle royal ensues, and further attention is completely diverted from puss.

Well done, puss!

To proceed—

The next step in the Handley Cross hunt, was getting a boy to collect the hounds before hunting.*

They lay wide, and sometimes Mountain's master couldn't come, consequently, Mountain was not there; sometimes Tipler's master was absent, and the pack lost the services of Tipler's unerring nose.

Next, some of the farmers began to ride. At first they came out with young horses, just to let them *see* hounds—then as the horses got older they thought they might as well work them till they sold them, and at last it ended in their riding as a matter of course. Foremost among the riders was Michael Hardey. He had always

* It is only those who have witnessed it that can credit the sagacity evinced by trencher-fed hounds in knowing the hunting mornings, placing themselves ready for the summons, and rushing with joyous cry to meet the messenger.

been a great promoter of the hunt, breeding his hounds as he did his horses, for speed and substance. Some used to say they were *ray*ther too swift for a hare. Others, however, followed his example, and in course of time the heavy towling harriers were converted into quick and dashing hounds.

Time rolled on, and Michael at length became looked upon as the master or manager of the pack. Having been always more addicted to fox than to hare, he had infused a spirit into the country which ended in making the wily animal their quarry.

The hounds were still kept at walks during the summer, but Michael fitted up a kennel at his farm to which they were brought towards the autumn. Peter, the pedestrian huntsman, was taken into Michael's service, clothed and mounted.

Of course all this was done by subscription. Some gave Michael cash, some gave him corn, some hay, others straw, and all the old horses in the country found their ways to his farm.

They were then called fox-hounds.

The first day of the first season, after their metamorphosis, the hounds met at Handley Cross —the Godfather of our work. It was a pretty village, standing on a gentle eminence, about the middle of the Vale of Sheepwash, a rich grazing

district, full of rural beauties, and renowned for the honest independence of its inhabitants. Neither factory nor foundry disturbed its morals or its quietude—steam and railroads were equally unknown. The clear curl of white smoke, that rose from its cottage chimneys, denoted the consumption of forest wood, with which the outskirts of the vale abounded. It was a nice clean country. The hazel grew with an eel-like skin, and the spiry larch shot up in a cane-coloured shoot. Wild roses filled the hedges, and fragrant woodbine clambered every where. Handley Cross was a picturesque spot—It commanded an almost uninterrupted view over the whole vale—Far, to the north, the lofty Gayhurst hills formed a soft and sublime outline, while the rich vale stretched out, dotted with village spires, and brightened with winding silvery streams, closed in on either side with dark streaks of woodland tracts.—To the south, it stretched away to the sea. Handley Cross, was a simple, unpretending village—The white-washed, thatched-roofed cottages formed a straggling square, round a village green, in the centre of which, encircled with time-honoured firs, on a flight of rude stone steps, stood the village cross, the scene of country hirings. Basket-making was the trade of the inhabitants; a healthy and prosperous one, if the looks of its followers, and the vine-clad and rose-

covered fronts of the cottages might be taken as an index. It had but one public-house—the sign of the Fox and Grapes, and that was little frequented—had it been, there would most likely have been two.

Thither our master brought his hounds the first day of the season in which they professedly began to hunt foxes. It was a day of interest in the vale, and people gathered from afar—The morning was beautifully fine, with a slight tinge of frost on the ground, that half-an-hour's sunshine would dissolve. A little before eight, the foot-people on the steps of the Cross, descried Michael crossing the vale by a line of hand-gates, from his house—the hounds clustered round his horse, and Peter bringing up the rear. On they come at an easy steady pace, and then the tall hedges below concealed them from their view—presently they rose the hill, and entered the village-green. "The hounds! the hounds!" cried the children, and away they rushed from the Cross to meet them.

Some of the hounds threw their tongues with delight, as they jumped and fawned on the hands that had fed them—Climbank met his master, and rushed to him with joy, while the honest fellow felt in his pocket for the accustomed crust. "Come-by-Chance," recognized his mistress, and nearly threw her down with the vehemence of

his salute. All was cheerful and bright – Michael's black horse pawed the ground, and whinnied with delight, as the hounds bayed him, or leapt against his sides. His master had paid a little extra attention to his toilette that morning; his well-brushed broad-brimmed hat, pressed gently on his close-lying nut-brown curls, his whiskers were newly trimmed, and he had evidently had a keen-edged razor to shave with— Health was on his brow, and a good-natured smile hovered o'er his swarthy face, displaying the brightness of his eyes and the whiteness and regularity of his teeth. Michael was then about forty; but for the fullness of his limbs one might have taken something off. The elements had rather hardened than sharpen'd the features of his face. He stood six feet high, with an amazing expanse of chest, and well-proportioned limbs. His hunting costume consisted of a good nut-brown coat, almost matching his complexion, a scrupulously clean white neckcloth, with a large flap-pocketed red waistcoat, patent cord breeches, and mahogany-coloured top boots. His undress, or home costume, was the same, with drab gaiters instead of boots; and his full, or evening costume, ditto, without the gaiters. A twisted hunting horn was slung across his shoulder, and he rode with a spare stirrup-leather round his horse's neck. This coal black steed was an animal of

amazing speed and power—nearly thorough-bred, with a light, well-set on head, clean flat legs, immense loins and hocks—he stood nearly sixteen hands, though the shortness of his tail made him look somewhat bigger—he was rising seven years old, and that was his first regular season. Peter was dressed like his master—coat, waistcoat, and breeches off the same web, and rode a wiry-looking bay mare, with white hind legs. He was then about thirty, short, light, and active, barely turning nine stone—Michael weighed fourteen.

Horsemen now began to arrive through the various openings among the cottages on the green. First came James Fairlamb, with his merry round face shining with the morning sun—He rode a crop-eared cob with a Roman nose; his dress consisted of a single-breasted plum-coloured coat, with large silver buttons, black boots, and white lambswool stockings drawn over his knees. Stephen Dumpling, the doctor, appeared at the door of the only four-windowed house on the green, followed by his maid with a foaming tankard. The contents being disposed of, he mounted his dun pony, and joined the group. He was dressed in orthodox black, with powder, and a pigtail, drab shorts, and top boots. The plot thickened—they came by twos and threes. Peter Jewitt, and Harry Jones; two

Smiths, and a Brown, then another Jewitt, then another Jones; Morgan Hains, and John Thomas; next a horse-breaker; after him, Mr. Giles, the brewer, followed by the Exciseman, on a mule; then Mr. Smith, the overseer, and Miss Fidget's young man with the letter-bag, a mole-catcher, and a gamekeeper.

All his comrades having come, Michael looked at his large silver hunting watch, and seeing it was half-past eight, prepared for throwing off. The couples were taken off the young hounds, master and man cocked forward their legs and tightened their girths, and then turned their horses' heads for the south, amid a chorus of delight from the hounds and the ill-suppressed cheers of the field.

A hazel copse or two were tried just for the sake of the chance, and on they trotted to a warm lying cover of gorse or brush wood, formed by the junction of two hills. Jolly-boy, Boniface, and Dexterous, feathered as they approached the spot, and the former dashing in with a whimper and a long drawn howl, Michael took off his broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, and waving in the pack, cheered them to the echo. His horse pricked his ears, and whinnied with delight, and could scarcely be brought to stand with his head towards the cover as Michael stood erect in his stirrups, with one hand on the cantrel of his

saddle and the other holding his whip and reins, while his eagle-eye roved over every part of the dell. "*Have at him there, my jewel!*" cried he to old Bonny-bell—a favourite white bitch that lived with him, and could scarcely ever be persuaded to quit his horse's heels,—as she stood whining, lifting a foot, and looking him earnestly in the face;—"*Have at him there, my old lass!*" re-echoed he, looking down upon her, and waving his right hand, to induce her to join cry. The old bitch dashed in, and the chorus increased. The gorse was close, or the hounds must have chopped the fox, for he had made two efforts to break up hill so as to fly for the woodland country, and had twice been driven from his point by Michael's voice and the crack of his whip. A momentary silence ensued, as they over-ran the scent, and Michael had just cried, "Look out, Peter!" to his whipper-in, who was stationed on the opposite hill, when the fox dashed over a piece of stone wall between two large ash trees in the high hedge at the bottom of the cover, and with a whisk of his brush, set his head straight down the vale, crossing over a large grazing ground of at least a hundred acres. "Silence!" cried Michael, holding up his hand to the foot people, who were congregated on the hill, as he turned his horse short and galloped to the point at which the fox broke away, where with a twang of his bugle, he

presently had the old hounds at his heels, and hat in hand he waved them over the wall. Jolly-boy feathered for a second on the grass, and then with a long-protracted howl, as if to draw his brethren to the spot, he went away with his head in the air, followed by Dexterous, Countryman, Bonny-bell, and True-boy, and after them went the body of the pack.

"*Gone away!*" cried Michael, "gone away! tally-ho! tally-ho! tally-ho!"

"Get away, hounds! get away!" holloaed Peter, cracking his whip as he trotted down the steep hill; and putting his bay mare straight at the fence at the bottom, went crash through it, with a noise that resembled the out-bursting of a fire in a straw-yard. Then came the rush: the black threw the stone wall behind him, as a girl would her skipping-rope; and James Fairlamb's cob came floundering after, bringing down the coping stones, with a rattle and clatter that would have been awful if hounds had not been running. The third man was the doctor on the dun, who made it still lower; and after him came Peter Jewitt and John Jones, (the latter leading over,) and impeding the progress of John Thomas, the other Jewitt, the other Jones, Morgan Hains, the overseer, and the parish-clerk of Welford, who all kept holloaing and swearing away—as obstructed gentlemen in a hurry generally do. The foot-people, seeing

how hopeless was the case, stood upon the hills, lost in mute astonishment, eyeing Michael on his black, careering over the meadows and hedges in a straight line with the pack, followed by Peter on his bay, and Fairlamb on his cob, until the plum-coloured coat of the latter assumed the hue of the others, and hounds, horses, and men, grew

"Small by degrees, and beautifully less."

"*Gently!*" cried Michael, as the black horse bounded over the fifteenth fence, with all the dash and vigour with which he had cleared the wall, and the hounds threw up over a fallow, the first check they had come to. "Yon way!" cried a countryman on a bean-stack, who had headed the fox, extending his arm like a telegraph; "to the left, past the hurdles." "*Let them alone!*" cried Michael, "*let them alone!* Jolly-boy has it down the furrow; hoic to Jolly-boy! hoic!" and a wave of his hat brought the pack forward, and away they go full cry, making the welkin ring with the music of their deep-toned notes.

——— "A cry more tuneable
Was never holloa'd to, nor cheer'd by horn!"

Forward they press; and Conqueror usurps the place of Jolly-boy. Poor dog, nature must not be denied, and age has slackened the vigour of his limbs! But they come to slow hunting, and the old hound's unerring nose keeps the pack upon

the line. The ground is stained with sheep, which scampering in a half circle as the fox went pass, complete the ring, now that they hear the hounds Michael pulls up, Peter is at his side, Fairlamb is in the next field—crack goes a rail, and the Roman-nosed cob is over, and the doctor's dun comes up just as Michael puts his finger in his ear, and screeches the pack forward to old Bonny-bell, who speaks to the villain under the gate. It is a rotten old thing upon one hinge, formed of at least twenty spars and rails, all rattling and jingling out of concert, and is fastened with hazel-bands and pieces of knotted rope. Michael's ponderous iron-headed whip breaks through them at a blow, and, thrusting the remains back with his right leg, he passes through and enters the open common beyond the vale. They are now upon the downs! all is brightness and space; Handley-cross appears like a speck in the distance, rendered visible only by the dark firs on the Green, and the vale looks like a web of green cloth stretched out behind.

They approach rising ground, and the pack no longer press forward in eager jealousy, but each hound seems settled in his place; in truth, the pace has told upon uneven condition, and four hounds alone carry the scent. The ground becomes steeper and steeper, and even the fox has traversed the "mountain's brow" at an angle. Now Clim-

bank's outline stands against the blue sky, and the pack wind after him in long drawn file. Michael jumps off his horse as he approaches the steep ascent, and runs up, leading; Peter follows his example, but Fairlamb sticks to the cob, and the Doctor begins kicking and digging the dun with his spurs.

The heights of Ashley Downs are gained, and the scene changes. The horizon is bounded by the sea, upon whose briny bosom float some pigmy vessels, and the white breakers of the shore are just visible to the eye. It may be five miles off, and the space between is undulating and open, save towards a tract of woodland that appears to join the coast. The Doctor reaches the summit of Ashley Downs, and pulls up fairly exhausted. He takes off his hat and mops the perspiration from his brow, as he sits viewing hounds, horses, and men, swinging away down the hill like a bundle of clock pendulums into the vale below. Not a house to be seen! no, not even a cottage, and as the hounds turn to the right, and run the depths of a rocky dell, whose projecting cliffs support venerable yews and red-berried hollies, their music rends the air,

"As if a double hunt were heard at once."

"It's twenty years since I was here," said Michael to himself, wiping the perspiration from

his forehead, "and the fox beat me I recollect. If we can but press him out, we must kill. That's the very crag!" added he, "just below the crooked oak. He has tried it, but, thank goodness, Jolly-boy carries the scent beyond! *Yooi on, hounds! yooi on!*" hollaas Michael from above, with a crack of his whip to some tail hounds that kept snuffling at his sides; "*Forrard, away, forrard!*"

The dell opens into a broader expanse of better soil, and the whole pack pour forth into the vale beyond with a chorus and a melody "of musical discord and sweet thunder," that makes even Fairlamb's cob, though somewhat distressed, snort and prick up his ears with pleasure. Forward they go, with every hound upon the scent and speaking to it,

> "What lengths they pass! where will the wandering chase
> Lead them bewilder'd!"

* * * *

"He's close *afoor* you!" cries a shepherd from a straw-thatched hut, whose dog having chased the fox had caused a check, and Michael cast forward at a trot. A flock of sheep wheeling round a field directed him to the line, and old Bonny-bell hits him off at the hedge-row. All the hounds then stoop to the scent and dash forward into the large wood beyond with mischief and venom in their cry. The wood is open at the

bottom and they get through it like wild-fire. Michael is with them, and Peter is outside, with Fairlamb behind. The wood becomes studded with evergreens and gradually opens upon a lake with a bridge of costly structure at the end; Michael views the fox dead beat, with his tongue out, and brush dragging along the ground just turning the corner to cross the bridge; and dashing forward, hat in hand, in another minute ran into him on the mossy lawn by the terrace of Ongar Castle, just as the Earl of Bramber and family were sitting down to breakfast.

Who shall describe Michael's ecstacy, as he picked up the fox and held him high above the baying pack. There he stood on the well-kept lawn, with his fox grinning in grim death in one hand and his low-crowned hat in the other, whooping and holloaing old Bonny-bell and the pack up to him, while the colt in a smoking white lather, kept moving about, stamping and pawing up the mossy bank as he went. Then Michael pulled his bugle round and sounded a blast that brought Peter and Fairlamb along at the best pace they could muster, just as the Earl of Bramber threw up the breakfast-room window, and the towers of the castle flashed upon Michael's view. All, however, was right, for his lordship having been a sportsman himself entered into his feelings, and, stepping out

upon the lawn, banished the idea of intrusion by congratulating Michael on his sport. The ladies, too, followed his example, and even forgave the trampling of the horse on their mossy carpet. The horses and hounds were then withdrawn from the terrace to a corner of the park close by, where the fox's brush, mask, and pads, being cut off, Peter climbed up a neighbouring oak, extended himself along a strong arm across which he balanced the fox, whooping and halloaing to the hounds, while Michael and Fairlamb did the same below, and the hounds being tantalized by expectation, and baying in full chorus, down went the fox crash into their mouths; "*tear him and eat him!*" was the cry, and he was riven to pieces in an instant.

Years rolled on with varying sport, but with Michael at the head of the hunt. Time slackened his pace and the pace of his field; but they all grew fat, and old, and grey together, and no one noticed the change in his neighbour. The hounds got a name, and while in their zenith none could twist up a fox sooner or in better style. With plenty of music and mettle, they seldom over-ran the scent, were never pressed upon, or over-ridden. They turned like harriers. Kennel lameness was unknown.

As a huntsman Michael was super-excellent. He knew when to lay hold of his hounds, and

when to let them alone. His voice was shrill, clear, and musical, his eye quick and bright, and he saw things that others never noticed. It is told of him that one day having pressed his fox very hard, and lost him most unaccountably in a wood of some ten acres, as he was telling his hounds over preparatory to going home, he all at once rode back to the top of a hill that commanded a view of the other side of the cover and tallihoed *away!* The fox being blown, was soon after killed, and when Michael came to account for his movements, he said that knowing the hounds were all out, he heard a blackbird frightened in cover, and supposed it might be by the fox moving, after they were gone. Hundreds of similar stories might be told of him.

In his large woodlands with which the outskirts of the vale abounded, many a fox owed his death to the way Michael threw in his tail-hounds at head. He knew his country and the runs of his foxes, and where he gained an advantage one season he did not forget to repeat it in the next. His dog language was peculiar, partaking more of the nature of dialogue than the short monosyllabaic cheering and rating of the present day. His hounds were strongly attached to him; and if by any chance he did not accompany them to cover, they would rush full cry from Peter and his boy to meet him on the road.

Peter was a capital coadjutor, and master and man played into each other's hands with keenness untinctured with jealousy. The whipper-in's nerve continued after his master's began to fail, and he might often be seen boring through a bullfinch to clear the way for old Michael, or stopping at a brook to give him a help over.

Peace to Michael's manes! He died at the good old age of seventy-four, without a groan or struggle. The lamp of life gradually flickered out, and his spirit passed away almost imperceptibly.

"His memory is cherished yet; and many people say,
With this good old English man good old times are gone for aye.'"

CHAPTER II.

"Throw physic to the dogs."

Well, as we said before, when Michael Hardey died, great was the difficulty in the Vale of Sheepwash to devise how the farmer's hunt was to be carried on.

The difficulty was increased by the change that had come over the country itself. After upwards of thirty years occupancy of it, Michael witnessed one of those magical revolutions that appear to belong rather to fiction than reality.

One Roger Swizzle, a roistering, red-faced, round-about apothecary, who had somewhat impaired his constitution by his jolly performances while walking the hospitals in London, had settled at Appledove, a small market town in the vale, where he enjoyed a considerable want of practice in common with two or three other fortunate brethren. Hearing of a mineral spring at Handley Cross, which, according to usual country tradition, was capable of "curing everything," he tried it on himself, and either the water or the exercise in walking to and fro had a very bene-

ficial effect on his somewhat deranged digestive powers. He analysed its contents, and finding the ingredients he expected, he set himself to work to turn it to his own advantage. Having secured a lease of the spring, he took the late Stephen Dumpling's house on the green, where at one or other of its four front windows, a numerous tribe of little Swizzles might be seen flattening their noses against the panes. Roger possessed every requisite for a great experimental (qy. quack) practitioner,—assurance, a wife and large family, and scarcely anything to keep them on.

Being a shrewd sort of fellow, he knew there was nothing like striking out a new light for attracting notice, and the more that light was in accordance with the wishes of the world, the more likely was it to turn to his own advantage. Half the complaints of the upper classes he knew arose from over eating and indolence, so he thought if he could originate a doctrine that with the use of Handley Cross waters people might eat and drink what they pleased, his fortune would be as good as made. To this end, therefore, he set himself manfully to work. Aided by the local press, he succeeded in drawing a certain attention to the water, the benefit of which soon began to be felt by the villagers of the place; and the landlord of the Fox and Grapes had his stable constantly filled with gigs and horses of the visitors. Presently lodgings were sought after, and carpeting

began to cover the before sanded staircases of the cottages. These were soon found insufficient; and an enterprising bricklayer got up a building society for the erection of a row of four-roomed cottages, called the Grand Esplanade. Others quickly followed, the last undertaking always eclipsing its predecessor, until that, which at first was regarded with astonishment, sunk into insignificance by its more pretending brethren.

The Doctor's practice "grew with the growth" of Handley Cross.

His rosy face glowed with health and good living, and his little black eyes twinkled with delight as he prescribed for each patient, sending them away as happy as princes.

"Ah, I see how it is," he would say, as a gouty alderman slowly disclosed the symptoms of his case. "Shut your potato trap! I see how it is. Soon set *you* on your legs again. Was *far* worse myself. All stomach, sir—all stomach, sir—all stomach—three-fourths of our complaints arise from stomach;" stroking his corpulent protuberancy with one hand, and twisting his patient's button with the other. "Clean you well out and then strengthen the system. Dine with me at five and we will talk it all over."

To the great and dignified he was more ceremonious. "You see, Sir Harry," he would say, "*it's all done by eating!* More people dig their

graves with their teeth than we imagine. Not that I would deny you the good things of this world, but I would recommend a few at a time, and no mixing. No side dishes. No liqueurs—only two or three wines. Whatever your stomach fancies *give it!* Begin now, to-morrow, with the waters. A pint before breakfast—half an hour after, tea, fried ham and eggs, brown bread, and a walk. Luncheon—another pint—a roast pigeon and fried potatoes, then a ride. Dinner at six, *not later mind*; gravy soup, glass of sherry, nice fresh turbot and lobster sauce—wouldn't recommend salmon—another glass of sherry—then a good cut out of the middle of a well-browned saddle of mutton, wash it over with a few glasses of iced champagne; and if you like a little light pastry to wind up with, well and good.—A pint of old port and a deviled biscuit can hurt no man. *Mind*, no sallads or cucumbers, or celery, at dinner, or fruit after. Turtle soup is very wholesome, so is venison. Don't let the punch be too acid though. Drink the waters, live on a *regimen*, and you'll be well in no time."

With these and such like comfortable assurances, he pocketed his guineas, and bowed his patients out by the dozen. The theory was pleasant both to doctor and patient, and peculiarly suited the jolly air of the giver. We beg pardon for not having drawn a more elaborate sketch of

Mr. Swizzle, before. In height he was exactly five feet eight, and forty years of age. He had a long fat red face, with little twinkling black eyes, set high in his forehead, surmounted by fullish eye-brows and short bristly iron-grey hair, brushed up like a hedgehog's back. His nose was snub, and he rejoiced in an ample double chin, rendered more conspicuous by the tightness of an ill-tied white neckcloth, and the absence of all whisker or hair from his face. A country-made snuff-coloured coat, black waistcoat, and short greenish drab trousers, with high-lows, were the adjuncts of his short ungainly figure. A peculiarly good-natured smile hovered round the dimples of his fat cheeks, which set a patient at ease on the instant. This, with his unaffected, cheery free and easy manner and the comfortable nature of his prescriptions, gained him innumerable patients. That to some he did good, there is no doubt. The mere early rising and exercise he insisted upon, would renovate a constitution impaired by too close application to business, and bad air; while the gourmand, among whom his principal practice lay, would be benefitted by abstinence and regular hours. The water no doubt had its merits, but, as usual, was greatly aided by early rising, pure air, the absence of cares, regular habits, and the other advantages, which mineral waters invariably claim as their own. One thing

the Doctor never wanted—a reason why it did not cure. If a patient went back on his hands, he soon hit off an excuse—"You surely didn't dine off goose, on Michaelmas-day?" or "Hadn't you some filberts for dessert?" &c., all which information he got from the servants or shopkeepers of the place. When a patient died on his hands, he would say, "He was as good as dead when he came."

The Handley Cross mania spread throughout the land! Invalids in every stage of disease and suffering were attracted by Roger's name and fame. The village assumed the appearance of a town. A handsome crescent reared its porticoed front at the north end of the green, to the centre house of which the Doctor removed from his humble whitewashed cottage, which was immediately rased, to make way for a square of forty important houses. Buildings shot up in all directions. Streets branched out, and markets, and lawns, and terraces, stretched to the right and the left, the north, the south, the east, and the west. The suburbs built their Prospect Houses, Rose Hill Villas, Hope Cottages, Grove Places, Gilead Terraces, and Tower View Halls. A fortune was expended on a pump room, opening into spacious promenade and ball rooms, but the speculators never flagged, and new works were planned before those in hand were completed.

A thriving trade soon brings competition — another patientless doctor determined to try his luck in opposition to Roger Swizzle. Observing the fitness of that worthy's figure for the line he had taken, Dr. Sebastian Mello considered that his pale and sentimental countenance better became a grave and thoughtful character, so determined to devote himself to the serious portion of the population. He too was about forty, but a fair complexion, flowing sandy locks, and a slight figure, would let him pass for ten years younger. He had somewhat of a Grecian face, with blue eyes, and regular teeth, vieing the whiteness of his linen.

Determined to be Swizzle's opposite in every particular, he was studiously attentive to his dress. Not that he indulged in gay colours, but his black suit fitted without a wrinkle, and his thin dress boots, shone with patent polish; turned-back cambric wristbands displayed the snowy whiteness of his hand, and set off a massive antique ring or two. He had four small frills to his shirt, and an auburn hair chain crossed his broad roll-collared waistcoat, and passed a most diminutive Geneva watch into its pocket. He was a widower with two children, a boy and a girl, one five and the other four. Mystery being his object, he avoided the public gaze. Unlike Roger Swizzle, who either trudged from patient to patient, or

whisked about in a gig, Dr. Sebastian Mello drove to and fro in a claret-coloured fly, drawn by dun ponies. Through the plate glass windows a glimpse of his reclining figure might be caught, lolling luxuriously in the depths of its swelling cushions, or musing complacently with his chin on a massive gold-headed cane. With the men he was shy and mysterious; but he could talk and flatter the women into a belief that they were almost as clever as himself.

As most of his fair patients were of the serious, or blue-stocking school, he quickly discovered the bent of each mind, and by studying the subject, astonished them by his genius and versatility. In practice he was also mysterious. Disdaining Roger Swizzle's one mode of treatment, he professed to take each case upon its merits, and kept a large quarto volume, into which he entered each case, and its daily symptoms. Thus, while Roger Swizzle was inviting an invalid to exhibit his tongue at the corner of a street—lecturing him, perhaps, with a friendly poke in the ribs, for over-night indulgence, Dr. Mello would be poring over his large volume, or writing Latin prescriptions for the chemists. Roger laughed at Sebastian, and Sebastian professed to treat Roger with contempt—still competition was good for both, and a watering-place

public, ever ready for excitement, soon divided the place into Swizzleites and Melloites.

Portraits appeared at the windows, bespeaking the characters of each—Swizzle sat with a patient at a round table, indulging in a bee's-winged bottle of port, while Mello reclined in a curiously carved chair, one be-ringed hand supporting his flowing-locked head, and the other holding a book. Swizzle's was painted by the artist who did the attractive window blind at the late cigar shop in the Piccadilly Circus, while Sebastian was indebted to Grant for the gentlemanly ease that artist invariably infuses into his admirable portraits.

Just as the rival doctors were starting into play, a third character slipped into Handley Cross, without which, a watering-place is incomplete. A tall, thin melancholy-looking man made his appearance at the Spa, and morning after morning, partook of its beverage, without eliciting from widow, wife, or maid, an inquiry as to who he was. He might be a methodist preacher, or a music-master, or a fidler, or a fencer, or a lawyer, or almost anything that one chose to fancy—he might also be any age, from five-and-thirty to fifty, or even more, for strongly indented lines furrowed the features of a square and cadaverous countenance, while intrusive grey hairs appeared among his thin black hair, plastered to advantage

over a flat low forehead—straggling whiskers fringed his hollow cheeks, growing into a stronger crop below the chin.

His costume consisted of an old well-brushed hat, lined throughout with black, a mohair stock, with a round embroidered shirt collar, an old white-elbowed, white-seamed black dress coat, while a scrimpey, ill-washed, buff waistcoat, exposed the upper buttons of a pair of much puckered Oxford-grey trowsers, and met, in their turn, a pair of square-cut black gaiters and shoes.

The place being yet in its infancy, and many of the company mere birds of passage, the "unnoticed" held on the even tenour of his way, until he eat himself into the President's chair of the Dragon Hotel. He then became a man of importance. The after comers, having never known him in any other situation, paid him the deference due to a man who daily knocked the table with a hammer, and proposed the health of "Her Majesty the Queen," while mutual convenience connived at the absurdity of being introduced by a man who knew nothing of either party. Being of a ferretting disposition, he soon got acquainted with people's histories, and no impediment appearing in the way, he at length dubbed himself master of the ceremonies, and issued his cards,

"Captain Doleful, M. C."

Who, or what he was, where he came from, or any thing about him, no one ever cared to inquire. He was now "Master of the Ceremonies," and Masters of Ceremonies are not people to trifle with. The visitors who witnessed his self-installation having gone, and feeling his throne pretty firm under him, he abdicated the chair at the Dragon, and retiring to lodgings at Miss Jelly's, a pastry cook and confectioner, at the corner of two streets, opened books at the libraries for the reception and record of those complimentary fees that prudent mammas understand the use of too well for us to shock the delicacy of either party by relating it here.

This much, however, we should mention of Captain Doleful's history, for the due appreciation of his amiable character. He was pretty well off, that is to say, he had more than he spent, but money being the darling object of his heart, he perhaps saved more than others would have done out of the same income. He had been in the militia—the corps we forget—but he had afterwards turned coal merchant (at Stroud, we believe), an unprosperous speculation, so he sold the good-will of a bad business to a young gentleman anxious for a settlement, and sunk his money in an annuity. There are dozens of such men at every large watering-place. In this case, a master of the ceremonies was as much wanted

as any thing else, for the Pump and Promenade Rooms were on the eve of completion, and there would be no one to regulate the music in the morning, the dances in the evening, or the anticipated concerts of the season. It was out of Roger Swizzle's line, and, of course, Sebastian Mello disapproved of such frivolities.

Handley Cross had now assumed quite a different character. Instead of a quiet, secluded village, rarely visited by a stranger, and never by any vehicle of greater pretension than a gig, it had become a town of some pretension, with streets full of shops, large hotels, public buildings, public houses, and promenades. The little boys and girls left their labour in the fields, to become attendants on leg-weary donkeys, or curtseying offerers of wild flowers to the strangers. A lover's walk, a labyrinth, a waterfall, grottoes, and a robber's cave, were all established; and as the controversy between the doctors waxed warmer, Sebastian Mello interdicted his patients from the use of Swizzle's Spa, and diluting a spring with Epsom salts and other ingredients, proclaimed it to be the genuine one, and all others spurious. He then, under the signature of "Galen," entered into a learned and rather acrimonious argument with himself, in the great London Medical Mediator, as to the wonderful virtues of the Handley-Cross New Spa.

Galen, who led the charge, while admitting Dr. Mello's great talents, had described the waters as only so, so; while Dr. Sebastian Mello, disdaining the paltry subterfuge of an anonymous signature, boldly came forward, and stated facts to prove the contrary.

Galen, nothing daunted, quoted other places as superior; but his vehemence diminishing in the ratio of the doctor's eloquent confidence, he gradually died out, leaving the doctor the undisputed champion of a water capable of curing every disease under the sun. Parliament being up, and news scarce, the doctor contrived, through the medium of a brother, a selector of shocking accidents, to get sundry extracts inserted in a morning paper, from whence the evening ones gladly transplanting them, and the country ones rehashing them for their Saturday customers, the name of the waters, and the fame of the doctor, spread throughout the land, and caused a wonderful sensation in his favour.

The effects were soon felt, for lodgings and houses were written for from all parts, and as a crowning effort, a railway, for the purpose of supplying the metropolis with lily-white sand, passing a station within two miles, was just opened out, offering inexhaustible resources, from the wealth and complaints of the capital.

CHAPTER III.

"He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument."—LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

THUS, then, matters stood at Michael Hardey's death. A great town had risen in the centre of his country, the resort of the rich, the healthy, the sick, and the idle of the land. Rival doctors divided the medical throne, and Captain Doleful was the self-appointed *arbiter elegantiarum*. The hounds, though originally hardly a feature, had lately been appended to the list of attractions both in the way of newspaper encomiums, and in the more open notice of "Houses to Let." Indeed, such was the fame of Michael and his pack, that several corpulent cob-riding bachelors had taken up their quarters at Handley Cross, for the purpose of combining morning exercise and evening amusements, and several young gentlemen had shown such an anxiety to get the horses out of the flys, that Duncan Nevin, the livery-stable-keeper, had began to think seriously of keeping a hack hunter or two.

This worthy—a big consequential dark-haired dark-eyed, butler-marrying-housekeeper, having run the gauntlet of inn, public-house, and waiter, since he left service, had set up in Handley Cross, as spring-van luggage remover, waiter at short notice, and owner of a couple of flys, and three horses, which seemed more likely to do good than any of his previous speculations. Not that he knew any thing about horses, but having resolved that ten pounds was an outside price, he cold not easily lose much. As a seller, he was less contracted in his estimates.

He it was who first heard of the death of Michael Hardey, and quickened by self-interest he was soon at Miss Jelly's with Captain Doleful. Roger Swizzle being seen feeling a patient's pulse in a donkey gig, was invited to the consultation, and though none of them saw how the thing was to be accomplished—they agreed that it would be a great feature to have the hounds at Handley Cross, and that a public meeting should be called to take the matter into consideration. Of course, like sensible people, the land-owners would take their tone from the town, it being an established rule at all watering places, that the visitors are the lords paramount of the soil.

The meeting, as all watering place meetings are, was most numerously attended; fortunately some were there who could direct the line of pro-

ceeding. On the motion of Captain Doleful, Augustus Barnington, Esq., a rich, red-headed, Cheshire 'Squire, took the chair, and not being a man of many words, contented himself by stammering something about honour, and happy to hear observations. We do not know that we need introduce Mr. Barnington further at present, save as the obedient husband of a very imperious lady, the self-appointed Queen of Handley Cross.

Captain Doleful then squared himself into attitude, and after three or four ghastly simpers and puckers of his mouth, complimented the husband of his great patron, upon the very able manner in which he had opened the business of the meeting. "It would be superfluous in him to waste their valuable time in dilating upon the monstrous advantages of a pack of hounds, not only in a health-giving point of view, but as regarded the prosperity of their beautiful and flourishing town. To what was the prosperity of Leamington and Cheltenham to be ascribed, but to their hunting establishments, for it was well known their waters were immeasurably inferior to what *they* enjoyed, not only in sulphuretted hydrogen, but also in iodine and potash. But that was beside the question. For his own part, he stood there upon public grounds alone (hear, hear). His numerous and arduous duties of regulating the Spas in the mornings, the prome-

nades at noon, and the balls and concerts of an evening, left him but too little leisure as it was to pay those polite attentions to the fashionable world which were invariably expected from a well-bred master of ceremonies. Many of the aristocratic visitors to be sure, he observed by the subscription book at the library, had kindly overlooked his remissness—unintentional and scarcely to be avoided as it was—and he trusted others would extend him a similar indulgence. With respect to the maintenance of the fox-hounds, he confessed he was incompetent to offer any suggestion; for though he had long worn a scarlet coat it was when in the army—a Militia captain—and hunting formed no part of their *exercise*. Perhaps some gentleman who understood something about the matter, would favour the meeting with his ideas upon the number of dogs and foxes they should keep (laughter); the probable expence of their maintenance (renewed laughter), and then they might set about seeing what they could raise by way of subscription." The conclusion of his speech was greeted with loud applause, amid which the captain resumed his seat with a long-protracted mouth-stretching self-satisfied grin.

Mr. Dennis O'Brian, a big broad-shouldered, black-whiskered, card-playing, fortune-hunting Irishman, after a short pause rose to address the

meeting. "Upon his honour," said he, throwing open his coat, "but the last spoken honourable jontleman had made a mighty nate introduction of the matter in its true light, for there was no denying the fact that *money* was all that was wanted to carry on the war. He knew the Ballyshannon dogs in the county of Donegal, kept by Mr. Trodennick, which cost half nothing at all and a little over, which showed mighty nate sport, and that was all they wanted. By the powers! but they were the right sort, and followed by rale lovers of the sport from a genuine inclination that way, and not for mere show sake, like many of the spalpeens of this country (applause). If the company would appoint him manager-gineral, and give him a couple of hundred in hand, and three or four more at the end of the season, by the holy piper! he would undertake to do all that was nadeful and proper, and make such an example of every thing that came in his way, as would astonish his own and their wake minds for iver. He would have foxes' *pates* by the dozen. He had no fear; faith none at all. By the great gun of Athlone he would ride in and out of the Ballydarton pound, or fly at a six-foot brick and mortar wall, dashed, spiked, and coped with broken bottles! He had a horse that he would match against any thing that iver was foaled, a perfect lump of elasticity from his

shoulder to the tip of his tail—the devil be with him! but when you got on his back it was ten to one but he sprung you over his head by the mere contraction of his muscles! Faith! at his castle in Connaught, he had many such, and he would give any jontleman or man of fortune in the company that would fetch a few over to England one for his trouble." Thus Mr. Dennis O'Brian rattled on for ten minutes or more, without producing any favourable effect upon the meeting, for having won or borrowed money from most of them, no one felt inclined to allow him to increase his obligations.

When he had exhausted himself, Mr. Romeo Simpkins, a pert, but simple-looking, pink-and-white, yellow-haired youth, studying the law in Hare Court, in the Temple, being anxious to train his voice for the bar, came forward from the crowd that had congregated behind the chair, and looking very sheepish, after casting his eye into his hat, where he had a copious note of his speech, set off at a hand gallop with the first sentence as follows:—"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, in presuming to introduce myself upon the notice of the meeting, I assure you I am actuated by no motive but an anxious desire such as must pervade the breast of every free-born Englishman, every lover of his country—every—I mean to say every—every"—here he looked

imploringly round the room, as much as to say, "what a mess I'm in!" and then casting his eyes into his hat again, attempted to read his notes, but he had made them so full, and the novelty of his situation had so bewildered him, that they were of no use, and, after a long string of stutters, he slunk back into the crowd amid the laughter and applause of the company. As he left the room he dropped his notes, which, as the reader will see from the following specimen, were framed for rather a *serious* infliction: "*Presume* to address—love of country—of all out-of-door amusements, nothing like hunting—encouraged by best authorities—practised by greatest men—*Sacred history* —Nimrod of Babylon—Venus took the field—Adonis killed in chase—Persians fond of hunting —Athenians ditto—Solon restrained ardour—Lacedemonians and their breed of speedy dogs—Xenephon—Olympic games—Romans—Aristotle —Oppian—Hadrian—Ascanius—Somerville—Beckford—Meynell—Colonel Cook—Nimrod of Calais—Thanks—Attentive hearing."

Mr. Abel Snorem next addressed the meeting. He was a grey-headed, sharp-visaged, long-nosed, but rather gentlemanly-looking, well-dressed man, who was notorious for addressing every meeting he could get to, and wearying the patience of his audiences by his long-winded orations. Throwing back his coat, he gave the

table a thump with his knuckles and immediately proceeded to speak, lest the Chairman should suffer any one else to catch his eye.—"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen," said he, "if I am rightly informed, for I have not a copy of the proclamation with me, this meeting has been convened for the purpose of taking into consideration a very important question connected with the prosperity of this salubrious spot;—a spot I may say unrivalled both for its health-giving properties, and for those rural beauties that nature has so bountifully lavished around. In bringing our minds to the calm and deliberate consideration of the subject—fraught, as I may say it is, with the welfare, the happiness, the recreation, the enjoyment, of many of those around—I feel assured that it would be wholly superfluous in me to point out the propriety of exercising a sound, impartial, unbiassed judgment—dismissing from our minds all political bias, all party feeling, all invidious comparison, all speculative theories, and of looking at the question in its single capacity, weighing it according to its true merits, apart from all personal consideration, and legislating upon it in such a manner as we shall conceive will be most conducive to the true interest of this town, and to the honour and welfare of the British dominions. (Laughter and loud coughing, with cries of "question.") The ques-

tion appeared to him to be one of great simplicity, and whether he regarded it in the aggregate, or considered it in detail, he found none of those perplexing difficulties, those aggravating technicalities, those harrowing, heart-burning jealousies, that too frequently enveloped matters of less serious import, and led the mind insensibly from the contemplation of the abstract question that should engage it, into those loftier fields of human speculation that better suited the discursive and ethereal genius of the philosopher, than the more substantial matter-of-fact understandings of sober-minded men of business (loud coughing and scraping of feet.) Neither was it tinctured with any considerations that could possibly provoke a comparison between the merits of the agricultural and manufacturing interests, or excite a surmise as to the stability of the lords, or the security of the church, or yet the constitution of the commons; it was, in short, one of those questions upon which contending parties, meeting on neutral ground, might extend the right hand of fellowship and friendship, when peace and harmony might kiss each other, truth and justice join the embrace, and the lion and the lamb lie down together" —("*cock a doodle doo!*" crowed some one, which produced a roar of laughter followed by cheers, whistles, coughs, scraping of feet, and great confusion.) Mr Snorem, quite undaunted and with

features perfectly unmoved, merely noticed the interruption by a wave of the right hand, and silence returning, in consequence of the exhaustion of the "movement" party, he drew breath and again went off at score.

"The question, he would repeat, was far from being one of difficulty—nay, so simple did it appear to his mind, that he should be greatly surprised if any difference of opinion existed upon it. He rejoiced to think so, for nothing was more conducive to the success of a measure than the unanimous support of all parties interested in it; and he did hope and trust, that the result of that meeting would show to the world how coinciding in sentiment had been the deliberation of the distinguished assembly which he then had the honour of addressing" (applause with loud coughing, and renewed cries of "question, question," "shut it up," "order, order.")—"He was dealing with it as closely, and acutely, as logic and the English language would allow (renewed uproar.) It appeared to him to be simply this—Divest the question of all superfluous matter, all redundant verbiage, and then, let the meeting declare that the establishment respecting whose future maintenance they had that day assembled, had been one of essential service to the place—upon that point, he had no doubt they would be unanimous—(yes, yes, we know all that). Secondly; they

should declare that its preservation was one of paramount importance to the place and neighbourhood, and then it would necessarily resolve itself into this ("*cock a doodle, do!*" with immense laughter)—those who were of opinion that the establishment was of importance would give it their countenance and support, while on the other hand those, who were of a contrary opinion, would have nothing whatever to say to it. He regretted the apparent reluctance of some of the company to grant him a fair and extended hearing, because, without vanity, he thought that a gentleman like himself in the habit of attending and addressing public meetings (laughter) was likely to clear away many of the cobwebs, films, mistifications, and obstructions that hung in the way of a clear and unprejudiced view and examination of the question; but such unfortunately being the case, he should content himself by simply moving the resolution which he held in his hand and would read to the company."

"That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the hounds which have hitherto hunted the vale of Sheepwash and adjacent country, have contributed very materially to the amusement of the inhabitants and visitors of Handley Cross Spa." Mr. Hookem, the librarian, seconded the resolution, which was put, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Fleeceall, the solicitor, a violent Swizzleite, then stood forward to address the meeting.—He was a tallish, middle-aged, very sinister-looking, bald-headed gentleman, with a green patch over one eye, and a roguish expression in the other. He was dressed in a claret-coloured duffle-frock coat, a buff kerseymere waistcoat with gilt buttons, drab trousers, with shoes and stockings. After two or three hems and haws, he began—"Very few countries," he said, "were now without hounds—certainly none in the neighbourhood of a town of the size, importance, and population of Handley Cross; a population too, he should observe, composed almost entirely of the aristocracy and pleasure and health-hunting portions of society.—A couplet occurred to his recollection, which he thought was not inapplicable to the question before them, though he must observe that he introduced it without reference to any quarrel he might have had with a certain would-be medical man in the place, and without any intention of injuring that individual in the estimation of those, who were inclined to place confidence in his prescriptions; he merely quoted the lines in illustration of his position, and as being better than his great and increasing business, not only as an Attorney at law and Solicitor in the High Court of Chancery, but also as a Conveyancer, and Secretary of the Poor Law Board of Guardians, and Clerk of the

Mount Zion turnpike road, would allow him time to pen. They were these:

> "Better to rove in fields for health unbought,
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught;"

and he was sure no one there would deny that hunting, of all pursuits, was best calculated to restore or produce health and drive away dull care, the ills and evils of life, whether in mind or body (applause). Exercise, he would say, without invidious allusion, was the best of all *medicines*. They were standing in the garden of England. On every side Nature's charms were displayed around; and Handley Cross was the capital of Beauty's empire (applause). Within her bounds an unrivalled Spa had burst into existence, the health-giving qualities of whose gushing waters would draw people from all nations of the earth (cheers). Air, water, and exercise, he contended, would cure anything that was capable of relief (cheers). Let them, then, take measures for inducing people to enjoy the pure atmosphere from other motives than mere change of air, and the day could not be far distant when quackery would fail and hunting flourish. His business, as he said before, was great—almost overpowering; but such was his devotion to the place—such his detestation of humbug and knavery, that he would not hesitate to accept the situation of secretary to the hunt in

addition to his other numerous and arduous appointments, and accept it too upon terms much lower than any other man could afford to take it at."

Mr. Smith, a Hampshire gentleman one of the earliest patrons of Handley Cross Spa, who, from the circumstance of his lodging round the corner of Hookem's library, had acquired the name of "Round-the-corner Smith," next presented himself to the notice of the meeting. He was a smart, genteelly dressed man, apparently about five-and-thirty, or forty, with a tremendous impediment in his speech—so troublesome was it indeed, that it was hard to say whether it was most distressing to his hearers or himself. After opening a very natty single-breasted blue surtout, so as to exhibit a handsome double-breasted shawl waistcoat with a Venetian watch chain, he coughed, and commenced—not a speech, but a long string of stutters. "He felt con-sid-did-did-did-rable di-di-di-difficulty in pro-no-no-no-no-nouncing an o-p-p-p-p-pinion upon the matter under con-sid-did-did-de-ration, because he was not co-co-co-co-conversant with the c-c-country, b-b-but he t-t-took it to be an establish-lish-lished rule, that all men who h-h-hun-hunted regularly with a p-p-pack of ho-ho-ho-hounds, ought to contribute to their sup-sup-sup-port.—He knew something about h-h-h-hun-hunting, and if his hu-hu-hu-

humble services would be of any avail, the co-co-co-country might command them. At the same time he thought, that the h-h-h-hunt would be more li-li-likely to pros-pros-prosper if there were more ma-managers than one, and that a co-co-co-committee would be the likeliest thing under existing cir-cir-cir-circumstances to give sa-tis-tis-faction.—He therefore be-be-begged to move the following resolution."—"That it is expe-pe-pedient that the Vale of She-she-sheepwash ho-ho-ho-hounds should in fu-fu-future be carried on by subscription, by a co-co-co-committee of management, under the name of the Ha-ha-ha-handley Cross ho-ho-ho-hounds."

Captain Doleful begged to propose as a fit and proper person to be associated with the honourable gentleman who had just addressed them, in the future management of the pack, his worthy, excellent, public-spirited, and popular friend, Augustus Barnington, Esq., of Barnington Hall, Cheshire, who, he felt convinced, would prove a most valuable ally not only in the field but also in superintending the home department, and arrangements, such as hunt dinners, hunt balls, and other entertainments to the ladies, which, he felt assured, it would be equally the pride of the hunt to offer, and the pleasure of the fair sex to accept." (applause)

Some one then proposed, that Stephen Dump-

ling, son of the dun-pony riding doctor, should form the third.

Old Dumpling was dead, leaving Stephen a nice farm, and somewhat independant, but the latter had a soul above the plough, and having got a cornetcy in the yeomanry, had started a gig and horse, and drove about with a clown at his side, with a cockade in his hat. Stephen was a goodish-looking half-farmer, half-gentleman, sort of fellow, half-buck and half-hawbuck. He was of middle stature, dark-complexioned, with dark eyes and dark hair; but there was a sort of unfinished style about him that prevented him passing for a gentleman. If his hat was good, his boots were bad, and a good coat would be spoilt by a vulgar waistcoat, or misfitting trousers. He grew whiskers under his chin—smoked cigars—and rode steeple-chases. Still he was an aspiring youth, and took, as a matter of right, that which was only done to keep the farmers and landowners quiet—namely, adding him to the committee.

All this being carried nem con, the uniform was next discussed, and great was the diversity of opinion as to colour. Some wanted yellow, some wanted green, others blue, some both blue and green; in short, all gay colours had their supporters, but the old scarlet at length carried it, with the addition of a blue collar.

But the resolutions will best describe the result of the meeting.

The following is a copy :—

At a meeting of the visitors and inhabitants of Handley Cross Spa, held at the Dragon Inn, in Handley Cross, on the day of to take into consideration the circumstances arising out of the lamented death of Michael Hardey, Esq., the late master of the hounds.

Augustus Barnington, Esq., in the Chair.

It was resolved,

That it was highly expedient to continue the hunt, and remove the hounds to Handley Cross.

That Augustus Barnington, Henry Smith, and Stephen Dumpling, Esquires, be appointed a committee of management.

That a club be formed, called the Handley Cross Hunt Club, the subscription to be three guineas, to be paid annually in November, to which the first twenty members shall be elected by the committee, and the subsequent members by the club at large—one black ball in ten excluding.

That, in order to meet the wishes of gentlemen desirous of contributing more than the annual subscription of three guineas, the treasurer be fully authorized to take as much as any one will give.

That the undress uniform be a scarlet coat, with

a blue collar, and such a button as the masters may appoint, breeches and waistcoat *ad libitum*.

That the dress uniform be a sky-blue coat, lined with pink silk, canary-coloured shorts, and white silk stockings.

That any member appearing at the cover side, or at an evening meeting of the members, in any other dress, be fined one pound one, for the good of the hunt.

Signed, A. Barnington, Chairman.

CHAPTER IV.

"Then round the room the circling Dowagers sweep,
Then in loose waltz their thin-clad daughters leap ;
The first in lengthened line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfettered limb ;"

Joy, universal joy, prevailed at Handley Cross, when it became known that a committee of management had undertaken to hunt the Vale of Sheepwash. The place had not had such a fillip before—Farmers looked at their fields and their stacks, and calculated the consumption of corn.

Duncan Nevin took a six-stalled stable, and putting a splendid sign of a fox peeping over a rock at some rabbits, christened it, the

"NIMROD MEWS

LIVERY AND BAIT STABLES.

HUNTERS, HACKS, AND PERFECT LADIES' PADS.

N. B. A GLASS COACH."

Emboldened by success, he scraped together five-and-twenty pounds, and asked every body he met, if he could tell him of a horse for the field. No one with money need long want a horse, but

Duncan saw so differently when purchasing, to what he did when selling, that he seemed to have two pair of eyes. To be sure, he was a good judge of a tail, and that, for a watering-place job-master, is something—"Don't tell me what Tattersall says about rat-tails," he used to observe, "I like them full, fine, and long. A horse with a full tail, looks well in the field, on the road, or in harness, and will always bring his price."

His first purchase was an old roman-nosed, white-faced, white-stockinged, brown horse, that had carried the huntsman of a pack of harriers for many a-year, and was known by the distinguished name of Bull-dog. He was a little, well-shaped, but remarkably ugly horse, and had a rheumatic affection in one of his hind legs, that caused him to limp, and occasionally to go on three legs. He was never fast, and sixteen or seventeen years had somewhat slackened the pace of his youth, but he was a remarkably hard-constitutioned animal, that no one could drive beyond his speed, and he could creep through or leap almost any thing he was put to.

The harriers being done up, the subscribers had handsomely presented the huntsman with his horse, which he came to offer Duncan Nevin for his stud. "He's varry like the field," observed Nevin, eying him, "but his tail's shocking shabby, more like a worn-out whitening brush

than anything else—our customers require them handsome—I fear he would only do for the field—I want them generally useful."

The huntsman declared he would go twice a-week all the season, and offered to leap him over a gate—This he did so well, that Duncan Nevin priced him—fifteen pounds was all he asked, and he bought him for ten.

A sixteen hands, bad bay mare, with a very large head, very light middle, and tail down to the hocks, was his next purchase for the field. She was a showy, washy, useless beast, that could caper round a corner, or gallop half-mile heats, if allowed plenty of breathing time, but invariably pulled off her shoes at her leaps, and was a whistler to boot—she cut behind and dished before—still she had an undeniable tail, and her size, and great hocks, as she stood well-clothed and littered, gave her the appearance of a hunter. She was six years old, had never done any work—because she never could, and in all probability never would. The wags christened her De Melcis, on account of her musical powers.

Fair Rosamond, a little cantering up and down white hack, stood in the third stall; and when all the three fly-horses were in, which was never except at night, the six-stall stable was full. The news of the purchases flew like lightning,—the number was soon magnified into ten—crowds

besieged the mews to learn the terms, and the secretary wrote to know what Nevin meant to give to the hunt.

Every thing now looked cheerful and bright—the hounds were the finest play-things in the world—they furnished occupation morning, noon, and night. Every man that was ever known to have been on horseback was invited to qualify for wearing the unrivalled uniform. Names came rolling in rapidly—the farmers, to the number of fifteen, sent in their five and ten pound notes, while the visitors were extremely liberal with their names, especially on a representation from Fleeceall, that payment might be made at their convenience—their names, the *honour* of their names, in short, being the principal thing the committee looked to. Dennis O'Brian put his down for five-and-twenty guineas, Romeo Simpkins did the same for five, Abel Snorem promised "to see what he could do," and all wrote, either promisingly, encouragingly, or kindly.

Duncan Nevin converted a stable into a kennel and feeding-house, and gave up his wife's drying ground for an airing yard, into which the poor hounds were getting constantly turned from their comfortable benches, by one or other of the committee showing them off to his friends. Then the make, shape, and colour of every hound was discussed, and what some thought defects, others

considered beauties. The kennel was pretty strong in numbers, for all the old worn-out, blear-eyed hounds were scraped together from all parts of the Vale, to make a show; while a white terrier, with a black patch on his eye—who was re-christened "Mr. Fleeceall"—and an elegantly clipped, curled, dressed, and arranged black French poodle, were engaged to attract the ladies, who seldom have any taste for fox-hounds. Every allurement was resorted to, to draw company.

Poor Peter soon began to feel the change of service. Instead of Michael Hardey's friendly intercourse, almost of equality, he was ordered here, there, and every where, by his numerous masters; it was Peter here, Peter there, and Peter every where, no two masters agreeing in orders. Smith would have the hounds exercised by day-break; Barnington liked them to go out at noon, so that he could ride with them, and get them to know him; and Dumpling thought the cool of the evening the pleasantest time. Then Barnington would direct Peter to go on the north road, to make the hounds handy among carriages, while Dumpling, perhaps, would write to have them brought south, to trot about the downs, and get them steady among mutton; while Smith grumbled and muttered something about "blockheads"—"knowing nothing about it." Each

committee-man had his coterie, with whom he criticised the conduct of his colleagues.

Autumn "browned the beech," but the season being backwardly, and the managers not exactly agreeing in the choice of a whipper-in, the ceremony of cub-hunting was dispensed with, and Peter, with the aid of Barnington's groom, who had lived as a stable-boy with Sir Harry Mainwaring, was ordered to exercise his hounds among the deer parks and preserves in the neighbourhood. November at length approached; the latest packs began to advertise; and Kirby-gate stood forth on the Monday for the Melton hounds. All then was anxiety! Sadlers' shops were thronged at all hours. Griffith, the prince of whip-makers, opened an establishment containing every possible variety of hunting-whip; and Vincent appointed an agent for the sale of "persuaders." Ladies busied themselves with plaiting hat-cords for their favourites, and the low green chair at the boot-maker's was constantly occupied by some gentleman with his leg cocked in the air, as if he had taken a fit, getting measured for "a pair of tops."

How to commence the season most brilliantly was the question, and a most difficult one it was. Dumpling thought a "flare-up" of fireworks over night would be a flash thing; Round-the-corner Smith was all for a hunt dinner; and after due

discussion and the same happy difference of opinion that had characterised all their other consultations, Captain Doleful recommended a *ball*, in the delusive hope that it would have the effect of making friends and getting subscribers to the hounds, and be done, as all contemplated acts are, at a very trifling expense. There was no occasion to give a supper, he said; refreshments—tea, coffee, ices, lemonade, and negus, handed on trays or set out in the anteroom, would be amply sufficient, nor was there any necessity for asking any one from whom they did not expect something in the way of support to the hounds. Round-the-corner Smith did not jump at the proposal, having been caught in a similar speculation of giving a ball to a *limited* party at Bath, and had been severely mulcted in the settling; but Barnington stood in too wholesome a dread of his wife to venture any opposition to such a measure; and Stephen Dumpling merged his fears in the honour, and the hopes of making it pay indirectly by gaining subscribers to the hounds. The majority carried it; and Captain Doleful spread the news like wildfire; of course, taking all the credit of the thing to himself.

What a bustle it created in Handley Cross! The poor milliner-girls stitched their fingers into holes, and nothing was seen at the tailors' windows but sky-blue coats lined with pink silk, and

canary-coloured shorts. The thing looked well, for fourteen candidates appeared all ready to owe their three guineas, for the honour of wearing the uniform, or for the purpose of getting their wives and daughters invited to the ball. It was fixed for the first Monday in November, and it was arranged that the hounds should meet in the neighbourhood on the following day.

Meanwhile the committee of management and Doleful met every morning for the purpose of making arrangements, sending invitations, and replying to applications for tickets. The thing soon began to assume a serious aspect; the names which at first amounted to fifty had swelled into a hundred and thirteen, and each day brought a more numerous accession of strength than its predecessor. Round-the-corner Smith's face lengthened as the list of guests increased, and Dumpling began to have his doubts about the safety of the speculation. Barnington took it very easily for he had plenty of money, and the excitement kept his peevish wife in occupation; and she, moreover, had plenty of friends, whom she kept showering in upon them at a most unmerciful rate. Every morning a footman in red plush breeches and a short jacket arrived with names to be put down for invitations. Doleful was in great favour with her, and by her request he took his place every morning at the table of

the committee-room to keep her husband "right," as she called it. Of course, with such incongruous materials to work with, the thing was not arranged without great difficulty and dissention. Dumpling put down his cousins, the three Miss Dobbs's, whose father was a farmer and brewer, and making pretty good stuff; "Dobbs's Ale" was familiar at Handley Cross, and his name occupied divers conspicuous signs about the town. To these ladies Mrs. Barnington demurred, having no notion of "dancing in a hop-garden;" and it was with the greatest difficulty, and only on the urgent representation of Doleful, that their rejection would cause the secession of Dumpling, that she consented to their coming. To divers others she took similar objections, many being too low, and some few too high for her, and being the daughter of a Leeds manufacturer, she could not bear the idea of any thing connected with trade.

At the adjournment of each meeting, Doleful repaired to her and reported progress, carrying with him a list of invitations, acceptances, and refusals, with a prospectus of those they thought of inviting. These latter underwent a rigid scrutiny by Mrs. Barnington, in aid of which all Doleful's local knowledge, together with Mrs. Fribble's millinery knowledge, Debrett's Baronetage, and Burke's Landed Gentry of England, were called together, and the list was reduced by

striking out names with an elegant gold pencil-case with an amethyst seal, as she languished out her length on a chaise-longue. One hundred and fifty-three acceptances, and nineteen invitations out, were at length reported the strength of the party; and Mrs. Barnington, after a few thoughtful moments passed in contemplating the ceiling, expressed her opinion that there ought to be a regular supper, and desired Doleful to tell Barnington that he must do the thing as it ought to be, if it were only for her credit. Poor Doleful looked miserable at the mention of such a thing, for Smith and Dumpling had already began to grumble and complain of the magnitude of the affair, which they had expected would have been a mere snug party among the members of the hunt and their friends, instead of beating up for recruits all the country round. Doleful, however, like a skilful militia-man, accomplished his object by gaining Dumpling over first, which he did by pointing out what an admirable opportunity it was for a handsome young man like himself, just beginning life, to get into good society, and perhaps marry an heiress; and Dumpling, being rather a pudding-headed sort of fellow, saw it exactly in that light, and agreed to support Doleful's motion, on the assurance that it made very little difference in the expence whether the eatables were set out lengthways on a table and called

"supper," or handed about all the evening under the name of "refreshments." Indeed, Doleful thought the supper might be the cheaper of the two, inasmuch as it would prevent the pilfering of servants, and the repeated attacks of the hungry water-drinking guests.

This matter settled, then came the fluttering and chopping-off of chickens' heads, the wringing of turkeys' necks, the soaking of tongues, the larding of hams, the plucking of pheasants, the skewering of partridges, the squeezing of lemons, the whipping of creams, the stiffening of jellies, the crossing of open tarts, the colouring of custards, the shaping of blanc-mange, the making of macaroons, the stewing of pears—all the cares and concomitants of ball-making and rout-giving; and Spain, the "Gunter" of the place, wrote off to London for four-and-twenty sponge cake foxes, with canary-coloured rosettes for tags to their brushes.

The great, the important night at length arrived. The sun went down amidst a brilliant halo of purple light, illuminating the sky with a goodly promise of the coming day, but all minds were absorbed in the events of the evening, and for once the poet's "gay to-morrow of the mind" was disregarded. Every fly in the town was engaged nine deep, and Thompson and Fleuris, the opposition London and Parisian perruquiers,

had dressed forty ladies each before five. Towards dusk, young gentlemen whose hair "curled naturally" came skulking into their shops to get the "points taken off;" after which, quite unconsciously, the irons were "run through," and the apprentice boys made door-mats of their heads by wiping their dirty hands upon them under pretence of putting a little "moisture in;" while sundry pretty maids kept handing little pasteboard boxes over the counter, with whispered intimations that "*it* was wanted in time to dress for the ball." Master-tailors sat with their workmen, urging their needles to the plenitude of their pace; and at dinner time there were only three gentlemen in all the place minus the canary-coloured inexpressibles, and one whose sky-blue coat could not be lined until the Lily-white-sand train brought down a fresh supply of pink silk.

Doleful began dyeing his hair at three, and by five had it as dark as Warren's blacking. Mrs. Barnington did not rise until after the latter hour, having breakfasted in bed; and young ladies, having taken quiet walks into the fields with their mammas in the morning to get up complexions and receive instructions whom to repress and whom to encourage, sat without books or work, for fear of tarnishing the lustre of their eyes.

Night drew on—a death-like stillness reigned around, broken only by the occasional joke of a

stationary fly-man, or the passing jibe of a messenger from the baker's, tailor's, or milliner's. The lower rooms of all the houses at length became deserted, and lights glimmered only in the upper stories, as though the inhabitants of Handley Cross were retiring to early rest.

* * * * *

Again, as if by general consent, the lights descended, and in drawing-rooms where the blinds had not been drawn or curtains closed, those who stood in the streets might see elegantly dressed young ladies entering with their flat candlesticks in their hands, and taking up their places before the fire, placing a satin-slippered foot on the fender, waiting with palpitating hearts for their flys, anxious for the arrival of the appointed time, but dreading to be early. Wheels had been heard, but they had only been "taking up," none as yet having started for the ball. At length the clatter of iron steps, the banging to of doors, and the superfluous cry of "To the Ongar Rooms!" resound throughout the town, and the streets become redolent of animal life.

A line of carriages and flys was soon formed in Bramber-street, and Hector Hardman the head constable, with his gilt-headed staff in his hand, had terrible difficulty in keeping order, and the horses' heads and carriage poles in their places. Vehicles from all quarters and of every

description came pouring in, and the greetings of the post-boys from a distance, the slangings of the flymen, with the dictatorial tones of gentlemen's coachmen and footmen, joined with the cries of the rabble round the door, as the sky-blue coats with pink silk linings popped out, resembled the noise and hubbub of the opera colonnade when a heavy shower greets the departing company.

The "Ongar Rooms" were just finished, and, with the exception of a charity bazaar for the purpose of establishing a Sunday school at Sierra Leone, had never been used. They were a handsome suite of rooms on the ground floor, entered from the street by two or three stone steps, under a temporary canopy, encircled with evergreens and variegated lamps. From the entrance-hall, in which at each end a good fire blazed, two rooms branched off, one for gentlemen's cloaks, the other for ladies. Immediately in front of the entrance, scarlet folding-doors with round panes opened into a well-proportioned ante-room, which again led into the ball-room.

Ranged in a circle before the folding doors, stood Barnington, Smith, Doleful, and Dumpling, all grinning, and dressed in sky-blue coats with pink linings, white waistcoats, canary-coloured shorts, and white silk stockings, except Doleful,

who had on a crumpled pair of nankeen trousers, cut out over the instep, and puckered round the waist. Dumpling's dress was very good, and would have been perfect, had he not sported a pair of half dirty yellow leather gloves, and a shabby black neckcloth with red ends. There they all stood grinning and bowing as the entrances were effected, and Doleful introduced their numerous friends with whom they had not the happiness of a previous acquaintance. The plot soon thickened so much, that after bowing their heads like Chinese mandarins to several successive parties who came pushing their way into the room without receiving any salutation in return, and the blue coats with pink linings becoming too numerous to afford any distinguishing mark to the visitors, our managers and master of the ceremonies got carried into the middle of the room, after which the company came elbowing in at their ease, making up to their mutual friends as though it were a public assembly.

The fiddlers next began scraping their instruments in the orchestra of the ball-room like horses anxious to be off, and divers puffs of the horn and bassoon sounded through the building, but still the doors remained closed, and Doleful cast many a longing anxious eye towards the folding doors. Need we say for whom he

looked?—Mrs. Barnington had not arrived. The music at length burst forth in good earnest, and Doleful, after numerous inquiries being made of him why the ball did not commence, at length asked Barnington if he thought his good lady was coming; when most opportunely, a buzz and noise were heard outside—the folding doors flew open, and in Mrs. Barnington sailed, with her niece, Miss Rider, on her arm.

Mrs. Barnington was a fine, tall, languishing-looking woman, somewhat getting on in years, but with marked remains of beauty, "sicklied over with the pale cast" of listlessness, produced by a mind unoccupied, and bodily strength unexercised. Her features were full-sized, good, and regular, her complexion clear, with dark eyes that sparkled when lighted with animation, but more generally reposing in a vacant stare whether she was engaged in conversation or not. In her head she wore a splendid tiara of diamonds, with costly necklace and ear-rings of the same. Her dress of the richest and palest pink satin, was girdled with a diamond stomacher, and a lengthening train swept majestically along the floor. Across her beautifully moulded neck and shoulders, in graceful folds, was thrown a white Cachmere shawl, and her ungloved arm exhibited a profusion of massive jewellery. Her entrance caused a buzz followed by silence throughout the

room, and she sailed gracefully up an avenue formed by the separation of the company,—

"A queen in jest, only to fill the scene."

Doleful and the managers came forward to receive her, and she inclined herself slightly towards them and the few people whom she deigned to recognize.

Having, after infinite persuasion, consented to open the ball with Dumpling, and having looked round the company with a vacant stare, and ascertained that there was no one who could vie with her in splendour, she resignedly took his arm, and the ball-room door being at length thrown open, she sailed up to the top of the room, followed by countless sky-blue-coated, and canary-legged gentry, escorting their wives, daughters, or partners, with here and there a naval or military uniform mingling among the gay throng of sportsmen and variously clad visitors. Most brilliant was the scene! The room was a perfect blaze of light, and luckless were the wearers of second-hand shoes or ball-stained gloves. There was Dennis O'Brian, towering over the head of every body else, with his luxuriant whiskers projecting from his cheeks, like cherubs' wings on church corners, with an open shirt collar, confined by a simple blue ribbon and a superabundant display of silk stocking

and calf from below his well-filled canary-coloured shorts,—for *smalls* would be a libel on the articles that held his middle man. His dark eyes sparkled with vivacity and keenness—not the keenness of pleasure, but the keenness of plunder, for Dennis had dined off chicken broth and lemonade to be ready to

"Cut the light pack or call the rattling main,"

as occasion might offer towards the morning. Snorem, too, had decked himself out in the uniform of the hunt, and this being his usual bed-time, he walked about the room like a man in a dream, or a tired dog looking where to lie down. Then there was Romeo Simpkins, who had just arrived by the last Lily-white-sand train, and had all his friends and acquaintances to greet, and to admire his own legs for the first time protruding through a pair of buff shorts. Fleeceall stood conspicuous with a blue patch on his eye, pointing out his new friends to his wife, who was lost in admiration at the smartness of her spouse, and her own ingenuity in applying the rose-coloured lining of an old bonnet to the laps of his sky-blue coat.

Now the music strikes up in full chorus, and Doleful walks about the room, clapping his hands like a farmer's boy frightening crows, to get the company to take their places in a country dance; and Mrs. Barnington, having stationed herself at

the top, very complacently leads off with "hands across, down the middle, and up again," with Stephen Dumpling, who foots it away to the utmost of his ability, followed by Round-the-corner Smith with her niece, Barnington with Miss Some-body-else, Romeo Simpkins, with Miss Trollope, Dennis O'Brian, who looks like a capering light-house, with little old Miss Mordecai, the rich money-lender's daughter, and some thirty or forty couples after them. Mrs. Barnington's train being inconvenient for dancing, and having been twice trodden upon, upon reaching the bottom on the third time down the middle, she very coolly takes Dumpling's arm, and walks off to the sofa in the bay window, where, having deposited herself, she dispatches Dumpling to desire her husband not to exert himself too much, and to come to her the moment the dance is done. The country dance being at length finished, a quadrille quickly followed; after which came a waltz, then a gallope, then another quadrille, then another waltz, then a reel; until the jaded musicians began to repent having been so anxious for the start.

Towards one o'clock, the supper-room door was heard to close with a gentle flap, and Doleful was seen stealing out, with a self-satisfied grin on his countenance, and immediately to proceed round the room, informing such of the company

as he was acquainted with, from having seen their names in his subscription book at the library, that the next would be the "supper dance;" a dance that all persons who have "serious intentions" avail themselves of, for the interesting purpose of seeing each other eat. Accordingly Dennis O'Brian went striding about the ball-room in search of little Miss Mordecai; Captain Doleful usurped Stephen Dumpling's place with Mrs. Barnington; Round-the-corner Smith started after the niece, and each man invested his person, in the way of a "pair-off," to the best of his ability. Barnington was under orders for Dowager Lady Turnabout, who toadied Mrs. Barnington, and got divers dinners and pineapples for her trouble; and Stephen Dumpling, being fairly "let into the thing," was left to lug in the two Miss Dobb's on one arm, and old mother Dobbs on the other. It was then "every man for himself."

The simple-minded couples then stand up to dance, and as soon as the quadrilles are in full activity, Doleful offers his arm to Mrs. Barnington and proceeds into the supper-room, followed by all the knowing-ones in waiting. But what a splendid supper it is! A cross table with two long ones down the centre, all set out with turkeys, chickens, hams, tongues, lobster sallads, spun sugar pyramids, towers, temples, grottoes, jellies,

tarts, creams, custards, pineapples, grapes, peaches, nectarines, ices, plovers' eggs, prawns, and four-and-twenty sponge-cake foxes, with blue, red, and canary-coloured rosettes for tags to their brushes! Green bottles with card labels, and champagne bottles without labels, with sherry, &c., are placed at proper intervals down the table,— the champagne yielding a stronger crop upon the more fruitful soil of the cross table. Who ordered it, nobody knows, but there it is, and it is no time for inquiring.

Shortly after the first detachment have got comfortably settled in their places, the music stops, and the dancers come crowding in with their panting partners, all anxious for lemonade or any thing better. Then plates, knives, and forks are in request; the "far gone" ones eating with the same fork or spoon, those only "half gone," contenting themselves with using one plate. Barnington is in the chair at the cross table, with a fine sporting device of a fox, that looks very like a wolf, at his back, on a white ground with "*Floreat Scientia*" on a scroll below, the whole tastefully decorated with ribbons and rosettes. Dumpling and Smith are Vice-Presidents. Hark to the clatter! "Miss Thompson, some turkey? allow me to send you a little ham with it?" "Mrs. Jenkins, here's a delicious lobster sallad." "Now, Fanny, my *dear*, see you're dropping the

preserve over your dress!" "Oh dear! there goes my knive!" "Never mind, ma'am, I'll get you another." "Waiter! bring a clean glass—*two* of them!" "What will you take?" "Champagne, if you please." "Delightful ball, isn't it?" "How's your sister?" "Who'll take some pine-apple punch?" "I will, with pleasure." "I've burst my sandal, and my shoe will come off." "Dear, that great awkward man has knocked the comb out of my head." "Go to see the hounds in the morning!" "Susan, *mind*, there's mamma looking." "Waiter! get me some jelly." "Bachelors' balls always the pleasantest." "Barnington is married." "Oh, he's *nobody!*" "Dumpling does it and stuttering Smith, there's no *Mister* Barnington." "There's the captain—I wonder if he sees us." "Oh the *stoopid!* he *won't* look this way. Should like to break his provoking head!" "How's your horse? Has it learned to canter?" "Take some tongue." "Champagne, if you please."

Thus went the rattle, prattle, jabber, and tattle, until Mr. Barnington, who had long been looking very uneasy, being unable to bear the further frowns of his wife, at length rose from his seat for the most awful of all purposes, that of monopolizing all the noise of the room,—a moment that can only be appreciated by those who have filled the unhappy situation of chairman in a company

of ladies and gentlemen, when every eye is pointed at the unfortunate victim, and all ears are open to catch and criticise what he says. "Barnington! Barnington! chair! chair! order! order! silence!" cried a hundred voices, in the midst of which Mr. Barnington tried to steal away with his speech, but had to "whip back" and begin again.

"Gentlemen and ladies, (order! order!) I mean to say Mr. Vice-Presidents, ladies, and gentlemen (hear, hear), I beg to propose the health of the Queen—I mean to say, the ladies who have honoured us with their presence this evening." Great applause, and every man drank to his sweetheart.

Mrs. Barnington looked unutterable things at her spouse as he sat down, for women are all orators or judges of oratory, and well poor Barnington knew the vigour of her eloquence. Beckoning Doleful to her side she desired him to tell Barnington not to look so like a sheepish schoolboy, but to hold himself straight, and speak out as if he were *somebody*. This Doleful interpreted into a handsome compliment, which so elated our unfortunate, that he immediately plucked up courage, and rising again gave the table a hearty thump, begged the company would fill a bumper to the health of the strangers who had honoured the Handley Cross hunt ball with their company. The strangers then began fidgetting and looking

out an orator among themselves, but were put out of suspense by the rising of Dennis O'Brian, who returned thanks in one of his usual felicitous and appropriate speeches, and concluded by proposing the health of the chairman. Barnington was again on his legs, thanking them, and giving "Success to fox-hunting," which was acknowledged by Snorem, who, being half asleep, mistook it for the time when he had to propose the healths of Smith and Dumpling, to whom he paid such lengthy compliments that the ladies cut him short by leaving the room. All restraint now being removed, the gentlemen crowded up to the cross table, when those who had been laying back for supper until they got rid of the women, went at it with vigorous determination,—corks flew—dishes disappeared, song, speech, and sentiment, were huddled in together, and in a very short time the majority of the company were surprised to find themselves amazingly funny.

CHAPTER V.

"It is our opening day."

HANDLEY CROSS had a very debauched look the morning after the hunt ball. The Ongar rooms being lighted with windows round the top, with covered galleries outside, for the accommodation of milliners, ladies' maids, and such as wish to criticise their masters and mistresses, had no protecting blinds; and a strong party having settled themselves into "three-some" reels—the gentlemen, for the purpose of dancing themselves sober, the ladies, like Goldsmith's clown, to try and tire out the orchestra—the ball seemed well-calculated to last for ever, when the appearance of day-light in the room, made the wax-lights look foolish, and caused all the old chaperons to rush to their charges and hurry them off, before bright Phœbus exposed the forced complexions of the night. All then was hurry-skurry; carriages were called up, and hurried off as though the plague had broken out, and Johns and Jehus were astonished at the bustle of their "mississes."

The last fly at length drove off; the variegated

lamps, round the festooned porch, began glimmering and dying in succession, as Doleful and the remaining gentlemen stood bowing, grinning, and kissing their hands to their departing partners, while their blue coats and canary-coloured shorts, exhibited every variety of shade and complexion that the colours are capable of. Doleful's hair, too, assumed a vermillion hue. The town was clear, bright, and tranquil; no sound disturbed the quiet streets, and there was a balmy freshness in the morning air, that breathed gratefully on the feverish frames of the heated dancers. The cock, "the trumpet of the morn," had just given his opening crow, in farmer Haycock's yard behind the rooms, and the tinkling bells of the oxen's yoke came softened on the air like the echoing cymbals of the orchestra.

St. George's chapel clock strikes! Its clear silvery notes fall full upon the listeners' ears. "One! two! three! four! five! six—six o'clock!" and youths say it is not worth while going to bed, while men of sense set off without a doubt on the matter. Some few return to the supper-room to share the ends of champagne bottles and lobster salads with the waiters.

Morning brought no rest to the jaded horses and helpers of the town. No sooner were the rosinantes released from the harness of the flys, than they were led to the stable-doors and wisped

and cleaned in a manner that plainly showed it was for coming service, and not for that performed. Bill Gibbon, the club-footed ostler of the "Swan Hotel and Livery Stables," had eight dirty fly-horses to polish into hunters before eleven o'clock, and Tom Turnbinn, and his deaf-and-dumb boy, had seven hunters and two flys ordered for the same hour. There was not a horse of any description but what was ordered for the coming day, and the donkeys were bespoke three deep.

If Duncan Nevin had had a dozen Bull-dogs and De Melcis, they would all have been engaged, and on his own terms too.

"Oh sir!" he would say to inquirers, "that Bull-dog's a smart horse—far too good for our work—he should be in a gentleman's stable—Did you ever see a horse so like the field, now? I'm only axin thirty pound for him, and it's really givin' of him away—I couldn't let him go out under two guineas a day, and then only with a very careful rider, like yourself—Cost me near what I ax for him, in the summer, and have had to put him into condition myself—Oats is very dear, I assure you—Perhaps you'd have the kindness not to say that he's hired, and save me the duty?"

A little before eleven, the bustle commenced; the first thing seen was Peter leaving the kennel with the hounds, Abelard, the black poodle, and 'Mr. Fleeceall," the white terrier with a black

eye. Peter was dressed in a new scarlet frock-coat with a sky-blue collar, buff striped toilanette waistcoat, black cap, new leathers and boots. His whip, spurs, gloves, bridle, and saddle were also new, and he was riding a new white horse. Barnington's groom followed, similarly attired; and this being his first appearance in the character of a whipper-in, he acted fully up to the designation by flopping and cracking the hounds with his whip, and crying "Co'p, co'p, hounds!—go on, hounds—go on! drop it!—leave it!—to him, to him!" and making sundry other orthodox noises.

Lamp-black was that morning in great request. Broken knees, collar and crupper marks had to be effaced, and some required a touch of lamp-black on their heads, where they had knocked the hair off in their falls. The saddling and bridling were unique! No matter what sort of a mouth the horse had, the first bridle that came to hand was put into it.

Stephen Dumpling's horse, having travelled from home, was the first of the regulars to make his appearance in the street. He was a great, raking, sixteen hands chesnut, with "white stockings," and a bang tail down to the hocks. He was decorated with a new bridle with a blue silk front, and a new saddle with a hunting horn. Stephen's lad, dressed in an old blue dress-coat of his master's, with a blue and white striped

livery waistcoat, top-boots, and drab-cords, and having a cockade in his hat, kept walking the horse up and down before the Dragon Hotel, while Stephen, with a feverish pulse and aching head, kept sipping his coffee, endeavouring to make himself believe he was eating his breakfast. At last he lighted a cigar, and appeared whip in hand under the arched gate-way. He had on a new scarlet coat with a blue collar, the same old red-ended neck-cloth he had worn at the ball, an infinity of studs down an ill-fitting, badly-washed shirt, a buff waistcoat, and a pair of what are called "Dorsetshire leathers*,"—a sort of white flannel, that after the roughings of one or two washings, give gentlemen the appearance of hunting in their drawers. His boots had not been "put straight" after the crumpling and creasing they had got in his "bags," consequently there were divers patches of blacking transferred to the tops, while sundry scrapings of putty, or of some other white and greasy matter, appeared on the legs. Independently of this, the tops retained lively evidence of their recent scouring in the shape of sundry up and down strokes, like the first coat of white-washing, or what house-painters call "priming," on a new door.

* These breeches used to be very popular with the members of Mr. Farquharson's hunt. Probably the gentlemen cleaned their breeches and coat collars (white) with the same article.

Dumpling's appearance in the street was the signal for many, who were still at their breakfasts, to bolt the last bits of muffin, drink up their tea, and straddle into the passage, to look for hats, gloves, and whips. Doors opened, and sportsmen emerged from every house. Round-the-corner Smith's roan mare, with a hunting horn at the saddle-bow, had been making the turn of Hooken's library for ten minutes and more; and the stud of Lieutenant Feelall, the flash riding-master,—seven "perfect broke horses for road or field," with two unrivalled ponies—had passed the Dragon for the eight Miss Mercers, and their brother Tom, to go out upon to "see the hounds." Then sorry steeds, with sorrier equipments, in the charge of very sorry-looking servants, paced up and down High-street, Paradise-row, and the Crescent; and a yellow fly, No. 34, with red wheels, drove off with Dumpling's nondescript servant on the box, and the three Miss Dobbs's, and Mother Dobbs, in scarlet silk pelisses, with sky-blue ribbons and handkerchiefs, inside. Jaded young ladies, whose looks belie their assertions, assure their mammas that they are not in the "least tired," step into flys and drive away through High Street, kissing their hands, bowing and smiling, right and left, as they go.

Abel Snorem, having purchased a pair of new top boots, appears in the sky-blue coat, lined with

pink silk, and the canary-coloured shorts of the previous evening, looking very much like a high-sheriff's horse *foot*man going out to meet the judges. Not meaning to risk his neck, although booted, he makes the fourth in a fly with Mr. and Miss Mordecai, and fat old Mr. Guzzle, who goes from watering-place to watering-place, trying the comparative merits of the waters in restoring appetite after substantial meals: he looks the picture of health and apoplexy. Mrs. Barnington's dashing yellow barouche comes hurrying down the street, the bays bearing away from the pole, and the coachman's elbows sticking out in a corresponding form. Of course all the flys, horses, and passengers, that are not desirous of being driven over by "John Thomas," the London coachman, are obliged to get out of the way as fast as they can, and he pulls up with a jerk, as though he had discovered the house all of a sudden. Out rush two powdered flunkies in red plush breeches, pink silk stockings, and blue coatees, when, finding it is only their *own* carriage, a dialogue ensues between them and Mr. Coachman, as the latter lounges over the box and keeps flanking his horses to make them stand out and show themselves.

A few minutes elapse, and out comes the portly butler with a "*Now then!* Missis coming down!" whereupon the Johnnies rush to their silver-laced

hats on the hall table, seize their gold-headed canes, pull their white Berlins out of their pockets, and take a position on each side of the barouche door. Mrs. Barnington sails majestically down stairs, dressed in a sky-blue satin pelisse, with a sky-blue bonnet, lined with pink, and a splendid white feather, tipped with pink, waving gracefully over her left shoulder. She is followed by Barnington and Doleful, the former carrying her shawl and reticule in one hand, and his own hunting whip in the other. Barnington, as usual, is well dressed, having on a neat-fitting, double-breasted scarlet coat, with a blue collar, and rich gilt buttons, sky-blue cravat, canary-coloured waistcoat, well-cleaned leathers and gloves, and exquisitely polished boots, with very bright spurs. Doleful, who is rather in disgrace, for having introduced a partner to one of the three Miss Dobbses over night, and has just had a wigging for his trouble, sneaks behind, attired in a costume that would have astonished Tom Rounding himself, at the Epping Hunt. It consists of an old militia coat, denuded of its facings and trappings, made into a single-breasted hunting coat, but, for want of cloth, the laps are lined, as well as the collar covered, with blue; his waistcoat is pea-green, imparting a most cadaverous hue to his melancholy countenance, and he has got on a pair of old white moleskin breeches, sadly darned and

cracked at the knees, Hessian boots, with large tassels, and black heel-spurs. He carries his hat in one hand, and a black gold-headed opera cane in the other, and looks very like an itinerant conjurer. What strange creatures *fine* women sometimes fancy!

Mrs. Barnington steps listlessly into the carriage, throws herself upon the back seat, while Barnington and Doleful deposit themselves on the front one; the door is shut with a bang, the "Johnnies" jump up behind, "*whit*," cries the coachman to his horses, off they go, the fat butler, having followed them up the High Street with his eyes, closes the door, and away they bowl at the rate of twelve miles an hour, round the Crescent, through Jireth Place, Ebenezer Row, Apollo Terrace, past the Archery Ground, and Mr. Jackson's public gardens, and along the Appledove road, as far as the Mount Sion turnpike-gate—leaving pedestrians, horsemen, and vehicles of every kind, immeasurably in the distance.

At the gate a crowd is assembled—Jones Deans, the "pikeman," has wisely closed the bar, and "*No trust*" stands conspicuously across the road. As the carriage approaches, it is thrown wide open, off goes Jones's hat, Mrs. Jones Deans drops a hasty curtesy, that almost brings her knees in contact with the ground, and the little urchins on the rails burst into an involuntary

huzza. John Thomas cuts on, and turns at a canter into the grass-field on the left of the road, where poor Peter has been walking his hounds about for the last hour or more. What a crowd! Grooms of every description, with horses of every cut and character, moving up and down, and across and around the field; some to get their horses' coats down, others to get their legs down, a few to get their horses' courage down, others to try and get them up; some because they see others do it, and others because they have nothing else to do.

There are thirteen flys full of the young ladies from Miss Prim's and Miss Prosy's opposition seminaries, the former in sky-blue ginghams, the latter in pink; Mrs. Fleeceall driven by her dear Fleecey with a new hunting whip, in a double-bodied one-horse "chay" with four little Fleecealls stuck in behind; Mr. Davey, the new apothecary, with his old wife, in a yellow dennet drawn by a white cart mare; Mr. and Mrs. Hookem of the library, in Jasper Green, the donkey driver's, best ass-car; farmer Joltem in his untaxed gig, with his name, abode, and occupation painted conspicuously behind; old Tim Rickets, the furniture-broker, in a green-garden chair drawn by a donkey; the post-man on a mule, Boltem, the billard table-keeper, and Snooks his marker, in an ass phaeton; Donald

Mc Grath," 'Squire Arnold's" Scotch gardener, on Master George's pony;" and Sam Finch, the keeper, and Thomas, the coachman, on the carriage horses.

Wrapped up in a large dirty Thurtell-looking witney coat with mother-of-pearl buttons, the size of half-crown pieces, in a single-horse fly, with a dirty apology for a postilion on the animal, with hands stuffed into his side pockets, and a hunting whip peeping above his knees, the mighty Dennis O'Brian, wends his way to the meet, his brain still swimming with the effects of the last night's champagne. As he diverges from the road into the grass-field, he takes his hunting whip from its place, loosens the thong, and proceeding to flagellate both rider and horse, dashes into the crowd in what he considers quite a "bang-up way." "Now, Peter, my boy!" he roars at the top of his voice, as standing erect in the vehicle he proceeds to divest himself of his elegant "wraprascal," "be after showing us a run; for by the piper that played before Moses, I feel as if I could take St. Peter's itself in my stride. —Och blood and ounds! ye young spalpeen, but you've been after giving that horse a gallop,— he's sweating about the ears already," he exclaims to a little charity-school boy, whom the livery stable keeper has despatched with a horse Dennis has hired for the "sason," warranted to hunt

four days a week or oftener, and hack all the rest—a raw-boned, broken-knee'd, spavined bay, with some very "going" points about him. "Be after jumping off, ye vagabond, or I'll bate you into a powder."

Romeo Simpkins then comes tit-tup-ing up on a long-tailed dun, with a crupper to the saddle, surrounded by the four Miss Merrygoes, all ringlets and teeth, and the two Miss Millers all forehead and cheeks,—the cavalcade mounted by the opposition riding-master, Mr. Higgs, who follows the group at a respectful distance to see that they do not take too much out of the nags, and to minute their ride by his watch.* Romeo is in ecstacies! He has got on an ill-made, cream-bowl-looking cap, with a flourishing ribbon behind, a very light-coloured coat, inclining more to pink than scarlet, made of ladies' habit cloth, a yellow neckcloth, his white waistcoat of the previous evening, and very thin white cord breeches that show his garters, stocking tops, and every wrinkle in his drawers; added to which, after a fashion of his own, his boots are secured to his breeches by at least half a dozen buttons, and straps round the leg. The ladies think Romeo "quite a dear" and Romeo is of the same opinion.

*At most watering places "unfortunates" are let out by the hour—half-a-crown an hour for a three legged one; three shillings for a horse that has four.

"Now, Barnington don't ride like a fool and break your neck," says the amiable Mrs. Barnington to her sapient spouse, as he begins to fidget and stir in the carriage, as the groom passes and repasses with a fine brown horse in tip-top condition, and a horn at the saddle; a request that was conveyed in a tone that implied, "I hope you may, with all my heart." Then turning to Doleful, who was beginning to look very uneasy as mounting time approached, she added, in a forgiving tone, "Now, my dear Captain, don't let Barnington lead you into mischief; he's a *desperate* rider I know, but there's no occasion for *you* to follow him over every thing he chooses to ride at."

Mrs. Barnington might have spared herself the injunction, for Doleful's horse was a perfect antidote to any extravagance; a more perfect picture of wretchedness was never seen. It was a long, lean, hide-bound, ewe-necked, one-eyed, roan Rosinante, down of a hip, collar-marked, and crupper-marked, with conspicuous splints on each leg, and desperately broken-kneed. The saddle was an old military brass-cantrelled one, with hair girths, rings behind, and a piece of dirty old green carpet for a saddle-cloth. The bridle was a rusty Pelham, without the chain, ornamented with a dirty faded yellow-worsted front, and strong, cracked, weather-bleached reins, swelled

into the thickness of moderate traces—with the head-stall ends flapping and flying about in all directions, and the choak-band secured by a piece of twine in lieu of a buckle. The stirrups were of unequal lengths, but this could not be helped, for they were the last pair in Handley Cross; and Doleful, after a survey of the whole, mounts and sticks his feet into the rusty irons, with a self-satisfied grin on his spectral face, without discovering their inequality.

"Keep a good hold of her mouth, sir," says the fly-man groom whose property she is, gathering up the reins and placing them in a bunch in Doleful's hands; "keep a good hold of her head, sir," he repeats, an exhortation that was not given without due cause, for no sooner did the mare find herself released from her keeper, than down went her head, up went her heels, off went the captain's hat, out flew the militia coat laps, down went the black gold-headed cane, and the old mare ran wheel-barrow fashion about the field, kicking, jumping, and neighing to the exquisite delight of the thirteen fly-fulls of pink and blue young ladies from Miss Prim's and Miss Prosy's opposition seminaries, the infinite satisfaction of Mrs. Fleeceall, whom Doleful had snubbed, and to the exceeding mirth of the whole field.

"*Help him! save him!*" screams Mrs. Barning-

ton with clasped hands and uplifted eyes as the old mare tears past the barouche with her heels in the air, and the loose riding M. C. sitting like "the Drunken Huzzar" at the circus, unconsciously digging her with his black heel-spurs as she goes. "Oh heavens! will nobody save him?" she exclaims; and thereupon the two powdered footmen, half dying with laughter, slip down from behind, and commence a pursuit, and succeed in catching the mare just as she had got the Master of the Ceremonies fairly on her shoulders, and when another kick would have sent him over her head. Meanwhile Mrs. Barnington faints. Fans, water, salts, vinegar, all sorts of things, are called in requisition, as may be supposed, when the queen of Handley Cross is taken ill; nothing but a recommendation from the new doctor that her stays should be cut, could possibly have revived her.

Peace is at length restored. Doleful, sorely damaged by the brass cantrel and the pommel, is taken from the "old kicking mare," as she was called at the stable, and placed alongside the expiring Mrs. Barnington in the carriage, and having had enough of hunting, Mr. John Thomas is ordered to drive home immediately.

Whereupon Peter takes out his watch and finds it exactly five minutes to one, the hour that he used to be laying the cloth for Michael

Hardey's dinner, after having killed his fox and got his horses done up. Barnington having seen his wife fairly out of sight, appears a new man, and mounting his brown hunter takes his horn out of the case, knocks it against his thigh, gives his whip a flourish, and trots up to the pack, with one foot dangling against the stirrup iron.

Peter salutes him with a touch of his cap, his groom whipper-in scrapes his against the skies; and Barnington with a nod, asks Peter what they shall draw? "Hazleby Hanger, I was thinking sir," replied Peter with another touch, "the keeper says he saw a fox go in there this morning, and it's very nice lying."—"Well then, let us be going," replies Barnington, looking around the field."—"No!" roars Stephen Dumpling, taking a cigar from his mouth; "Hoppas Hays is the place; the wind's westerly,"—wetting his finger on his tongue, and holding it up to the air,—"and if we can force him through Badger Wood and Shortmead, he will give us a rare burst over Langley Downs, and away to the sea."—"Well, what you please, gentlemen," replies Peter; "only we have not much time to lose, for the days are short, and my fellow servant here doesn't know the country; besides which we have five couple of young hounds out."—"*I say* Hazleby Hanger," replies Barnington with a frown on his brow, for he was unused to contradiction

from any one but his wife. "*I say* Hoppas Hays," replies Dumpling loudly, with an irate look, and giving his boot an authoritative bang with his whip.—"Well, gentlemen, which ever you please," says Peter, looking confused.—"Then go to Hazleby Hanger," responds Barnington. "*Hoppas Hays*!" exclaims Dumpling; mind, Peter, *I'm* your master."—"No more than myself," replies Barnington, "and I find the whipper-in." "Where's Smith?" shouts Dennis o'Brian, working his way into the crowd, with his coat-pockets sticking-out beyond the cantrel of his saddle, like a poor man's dinner wallet. "Here! here! here!" responded half a dozen voices from horses, gigs, and flys.

"No, *Round-the-corner* Smith I mean," replies O'Brian. "Yonder he is, by the cow-shed in the corner of the field;" and Smith is seen in the distance in the act of exchanging his hack for his hunter. He comes cantering up the field, feeling his horse as he goes, and on being holloaed to by some score of voices or more, pulls short round and enters the crowd at a trot. "What shall we draw first, Smith?" inquires Mr. Barnington; "I propose Hazleby Hanger." "I say Hoppas Hays," rejoins Dumpling.—"Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-zleby Ha-ha-hanger, or Ho-ho-ho-ho-hoppas Ha-ha-ha-ha-hays! I should think Fa-fa-fa-farley Pa-pa-pasture better than either." "Well then, let us draw

lots," replied Dennis O'Brian, "for it's not right keeping gentlemen and men of fortune waiting in this way.—By the great gun of Athlone, but the Ballyshannon dogs, kept by Mr. Trodennick, would find and kill a fox in less time than you take in chaffing about where you'll draw for one. See now," added he, pulling an old Racing Calendar out of his capacious pocket, and tearing a piece into slips, "here are three bits of paper; the longest is for Hazleby Hanger, the middle one is Hoppas Hays, and the short one shall be Farley-Pasture, and Peter shall draw;" whereupon Dennis worked his way through the crowd, advanced into the middle of the pack, and just as Peter drew a slip, Dennis's spavined steeple-chaser gave Abelard, the French poodle, such a crack on the skull as killed him on the spot. The field is again in commotion, two-thirds of the young ladies in pink ginghams burst into tears, while one of the sky blue pupils faints, and a second is thrown into convulsions and bursts her stays with the noise of a well-charged two-penny cracker. "*Who-hoop!*" cries Dennis O'Brian, "here's blood already!" jumping off his horse and holding the expiring animal in mid air; "Who-hoop, my boys, but we've begun the season gallantly! killed a lion instead of a fox!" and thereupon he threw the dead dog upon the ground amid the laughter of a few pedestrians,

and the general execration of the carriage company.

We need not say that the sport of the ladies was over for the day. There lay poor Abelard, the only dog in the pack they really admired; whose freaks and gambols in return for buns and queen-cakes, had often beguiled the weariness of their brothers' kennel lectures. The sparkling eye that watched each movement of the hand, was glazed in death, and the flowing luxuriance of his well-combed mane and locks clotted with gory blood—Alas, poor Abelard!

> "Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
> Still breathed in sighs, still ushered with a tear!

The hounds alone seemed unconcerned at his fate, and walked about and smelt at him, as though they hardly owned his acquaintance, when "Mr. Fleeceall," the white terrier with the black patch on his eye, having taken him by the ear, with the apparent intention of drawing him about the field, Miss Prim most theatrically begged the body, which was forthwith transferred to the bottom of her fly, to the unutterable chagrin of Miss Prosy, who was on the point of supplicating for it herself, and had just arranged a most touching speech for the occasion. Eyes were now ordered to be dried and the young ladies were forthwith got into marching order.—Pink ginghams wheeled

off first, and when they got home, those that did not cry before, were whipped and made to cry after; while the sky-blue young ladies had a page of Sterne's Sentimental Journey, commencing "Dear sensibility! source unexhausted of all that's precious in our joys or costly in our sorrows!" &c., to learn by heart, to make them more feeling in future.

The field, reduced one half, at two o'clock set off for Farley Pasture; the procession consists of five flys, twenty-three horsemen, four gig-men, and a string of thirteen donkeys, some carrying double, and others with panniers full of little folk.

Dumpling and Barnington look unamiable things at each other, but neither having carried his point, they ride along the sandy lane that leads to the cover in pouting sullenness. The cavalcade rides the hill that commands the cover in every quarter, where Peter and the pack wait until the long drawn file have settled themselves to their liking. The cover is an uninclosed straggling gorse of about three or four acres in extent, rising the hill from a somewhat dense patch of underwood, bounded on the east by a few weather beaten Scotch firs; the country around being chiefly grass fields of good dimensions. Dumpling canters round the cover, and takes a position among the firs, while Barn

ington plants himself immediately opposite; and Smith, determined not to be outdone in importance, establishes himself to the south. "*Yooi in there!*" cries Peter at last with a wave of his cap, his venerable grey hair floating on the breeze; "*yooi in there, my beauties!*" and the old hounds, at the sound of his cheery voice, dash into the gorse and traverse every patch and corner with eagerness; "Have at him there!" cries Peter, as Belmaid, a beautiful pied bitch, feathers round a patch of gorse near a few stunted birch and oak trees: "*have at him* there, my beauty!"—"yooi, wind him!" "yooi, push him!"

"*Talli-ho!*" cries Abel Snorem in a loud, deep, sonorous voice from his fly, rubbing his eyes with one hand and raising his hat in the air with the other; "*talli-ho!* yonder he goes." "*It's a hare!*" exclaims Peter; "*it's a hare! pray* hold your tongue, sir! pray do!"—It is too late; the mischief is done. Three couple of young hounds that did not like the gorse, having caught view, dash after her; and puss's screams at the corner of the ploughed field, are drowned in the horns of the masters, who commenced the most discordant *tootleings*, puffings, and blowings as soon as Abel Snorem's talli-ho was heard. Meanwhile the whipper-in has worked his way round to the delinquents, and jumping off his horse seizes the hind quarters of puss, whereupon

Vigilant seizes him *à posteriori* in return, and makes him bellow like a bull. The masters canter round, the field rush to the spot, and all again is hubbub and confusion. "Lay it into them!" exclaims Barnington to his groom-whipper-in; "cut them to ribbons, the riotous brutes!" "Don't!" interposes Dumpling, "*I won't* have the hounds flogged;" whereupon the ladies laud his feeling, and mutter something that sounds very like "Barnington and brute." Just as stuttering Smith is in the midst of a long string of stammers upon the question of corporeal punishment, a loud, clear, shrill talli-ho is heard proceeding from the neighbourhood of the fir trees, and Peter on the white horse is seen standing in his stirrups, cap in hand, holloaing his hounds away to their fox.—"Hoic together! hoic!" and the old hounds rush eagerly to the voice that has led them to a hundred glories.—"Yonder he goes by Mersham Hatch, and away for Downleigh-crag," exclaims a lad in a tree, and eyes are strained in the direction that he points.

"Forrard away! forrard." "Crack! crack!" go a score of whips; "talli-ho!" scream a dozen voices. "Away! away! away!" holloas Peter, settling himself into his saddle. "Away! away! away!" echoes the groom-whipper-in, as he stands rubbing himself, debating whether to mount or go

home to the doctor. Barnington races round the cover, Dumpling takes the opposite side, followed by Smith, and Dennis O'Brian shoves his spavined steed straight through the cover, and goes bounding over the high gorse like a boat off a rough shore. Romeo Simpkins and his tail trot after a fat old gentleman on a black cob, dressed in a single-breasted green coat, with mahogany-coloured top-boots, and a broad-brimmed hat, who makes for Ashley Lane, from thence over Downley Hill, from whence there is a full view of the pack running like wildfire over the large grass enclosure near Ravensdeen village, with no one but Peter within a quarter of a mile of them. Away they speed: and just as Peter's white horse looks like a pigeon in the distance, and the rest diminish into black specks, a curve to the left brings them past Arthingworth clump, leaving the old tower on the right, and skirting the side of Branston Wood, far in the distance they enter upon the tract of chalky land beyond. The old gentleman's eye catches fresh fire at the sight, he takes off his low-crowned hat, and mops his bald head with a substantial snuff-coloured Bandana, and again bumps off at a trot. He pounds along the lanes, turning first to the right, then to the left; now stopping to listen, now cutting through the backs of farm buildings, now following an almost imperceptible cart-track through a line of

field-gates, until he gains Surrenden Lane, where he pulls up short, and listens. "Hark!" he exclaims, holding up his hand to Romeo and his female friends, who are giggling and tittering at the delightful canter they have had; "hark!" he repeats, in a somewhat louder voice. A short sharp chirp is borne on the breeze; it is Heroine all but running mute. A deeper note follows, another, and another, which gradually swell into chorus, as the pack carry the scent across the fallow, and get upon turf nearer hand. The old gentleman is in ecstacies. He can hardly contain himself. He pulls his cob across the lane; his hat is in the air, no one views the fox but himself, the hounds pour into the lane;—a momentary check ensues. Villager speaks to it in the next field; Dexterous has it too—and Coroner, Harmony, Funnylass, and Ravenous, join cry!—they run the hedge-row—a snap and crack is heard just by the large ash-tree.—"*Whoo-whoop!*" holloas the old gentleman, putting his finger in his ear, and Peter comes bounding over the fence and is among his pack fighting for the fox.

Then up come the field, the horses heaving, panting, and blowing, all in a white lather, and the perspiration streaming off the red faces of riders. There has been a desperately jealous tussle between Barnington and Dumpling which

should ride first; and nothing but the badness of the start has prevented their being before the hounds. Dumpling has knocked in the crown of a new eight-and-sixpenny hat; while a strong grower that he bore before him through a stiff bull-finch, returned with a switch across Barnington's nose, that knocked all the skin off the bridge.

"I claim the brush!" exclaimed Dumpling, still in the air. "No such thing!" responds Barnington, as they land together in the deep lane, from the top of the high bank with a strongly pleached hedge on the top. "I say it's mine!" "I say it is'nt!" "I say it is!" "Peter, it's mine!" "Peter it isn't!" "At your peril give it to him!" "You give it to me, or I discharge you!"

"Well, gentlemen," replies Peter, laying the fox before him, "whichever way you please." "Then give it me." "No, give it me." "Isn't it mine, sir?" says Dumpling, appealing to the gentleman on the cob, "my horse touched ground first, and, according to all the laws of steeple-chasing that ever I've heard, or read of, in 'Bell's Life,' or elsewhere, that's decisive." "I should say it was Squire Hartley's," observed Peter, looking at the green-coated gentleman on the cob.

"Squire Hartley's!" exclaim Dumpling and Barnington at the same moment; "Squire Hartley's! How can that be? He's not even a member

of the hunt, and doesn't give a farthing to it." "It was his cover we found in," replies Peter; "and in old master's time, we always gave the brush to whoever was first up." "*First up*," roars Dumpling, "why he's never been out of a trot!" "And ridden the road!" adds Barnington. "What do we know about your old master?" rejoins Dumpling, "he was, a skirting, nicking, Macadamizing old screw." "He was a better sportsman than ever you will be," replies Peter, his eyes sparkling anger as he spoke. "Let us have none of your impertinence," replies Barnington, nettled at the disrespect towards a member of the committee; "and let me advise you to remember that you hunt these hounds for the amusement of your masters and not for your own pleasure, and you had better take care how you steal away with your fox again as you did just now." "That he ha-ha-ha-had," exclaims Round-the-corner Smith as he creeps down the side of the bank, holding by the cantrel of his saddle, into the lane, after having ridden the line with great assiduity without seeing a bit of the run; "I never saw such an impudent thing done in all the whole course of my li-li-li-life before."

Poor Peter made no reply. An involuntary tear started into the corner of his eye, when, having broken up his fox, he called his hounds together and turned his horse's head towards

home, at the thought of the change he had lived to see. Arrived at Handley Cross, he fed his hounds, dressed his horse, and then, paying a visit to each of his masters, respectfully resigned the situation of "huntsman to the committee of management of the Handley Cross fox-hounds."

CHAP. VI.

"By holy Mary, Butts, there's knavery."—HENRY VIII.

"A FELLOW feeling makes us wonderous kind," says the adage, and the present case was no exception to the rule. Our three masters, having slept on their visit from Peter, met the next morning, when all jealousies were merged in abuse of the huntsman. He was every thing that was bad, and they unanimously resolved that they were extremely lucky in getting rid of him. "Anybody could hunt a pack of hounds," and the only difficulty they anticipated was the possibility of the groom-whipper-in not being sufficiently recovered from his bite from the hound to be able to take the field on the Friday, for which day the hounds were advertised to meet at Meddingley, three miles down the vale, in the cream of their country. Barnington would have no difficulty in hunting them if any one would whip-in to him; Dumpling was equally confident; and Smith said he had no "he-he-he-he-si-tation about the matter." It was therefore arranged that each should lend a hand, and hunt, or turn the hounds, as occasion required, and let the world

at large and Peter in particular see what little occasion they had for his services. Meanwhile Beckford, Cook, and the Sporting Magazines, were perseveringly studied.

Friday came, but like an old "Oaks day" it was very languid and feeble; there was no polishing of hack hunters, no borrowing of bridles or lending of saddles, no bustle or hurry perceptible in the streets; the water-drinkers flocked to the wells as usual, and none but the regulars took the field. Among the number was our old friend Squire Hartley on his black cob, attired in the same green coat, the same brown top-boots, and the same low-crowned hat as before. Snorem and Doleful came in a gig in the inspection style, and Dennis O'Brian smoked three cigars before any one looked at his watch to see how the time went.

At length Squire Hartley ventured to inquire if there was any possibility of the servant having mistaken his way, whereupon it simultaneously occurred to the trio that there might be something wrong. Joe had orders to bring the hounds by an unfrequented lane, so as to avoid collecting foot people, and after another quarter of an hour spent in suspense, the field proceeded in the direction they ought to come. On rising a gentle eminence out of Sandyford Lane, a scarlet-coated man was seen in the distance standing in the

middle of a ploughed field, and a fustian-coated horseman was galloping about it, endeavouring to turn the hounds to the former, but in consequence of riding at them instead of getting round them, he made the hounds fly in all directions. The cavalcade then pressed on, horns were drawn from their cases, and our three masters cantered into the field, puffing, and blowing most unsatisfactory and discordant blasts. Joe then disclosed how the pack had broke away on winding a dead horse hard by, and how, after most ineffectual efforts to turn them, he had lent a countryman his horse and whip, while he stood in the field holloaing and coaxing them away.

This feat being accomplished through the assistance of the field, the hounds, with somewhat distended sides, proceeded sluggishly to the cover. It was a long straggling gorse on a hill side, with a large quarry hole at the far end, which, from long disuse, had grown up with broom, furze, and brushwood. The hounds seemed very easy about the matter, and some laid down, while others stood gazing about the cover. At length our masters agreed that it was time to throw off, so they began, as they had seen Peter, with a whistle and a slight wave of the hand, thinking to see the pack rush in at the signal,—no such thing however; not a single hound moved a muscle, and three or four of the young ones

most audaciously sat down on the spot. The gentleman on the black cob smiled.

"*Yooi over there!*" cried Barnington, taking off his hat and standing erect in the stirrups.

"*Yooi over there!* get to cover, hounds, get to cover!" screamed whipper-in Joe, commencing a most furious onset among the sitters, whereupon some jumped and others crept into cover and quietly laid themselves down for a nap. Five or six couples of old hounds, however, that had not quite gorged themselves with horse-flesh, worked the cover well; and, as foxes abounded, it was not long before our friend on the cob saw one stealing away up the brook that had girded the base of the hills, which, but for his eagle eye, would have got off unperceived.

"Talli-ho!" cried the old gentleman at last, taking off his hat on seeing him clear of the cover, and pointing southwards in the direction of Bibury Wood, a strong hold for foxes.

"Talli-ho!" responded Barnington without seeing him. "Talli-ho!" re-echoed all the others without one having caught view; and the old gentleman, putting the cob's head straight down the hill, slid and crawled down to the brook followed by the field. Here with much hooping holloaing, and blowing of horns, a few couple of hounds were enticed from the cover, and being laid on to the scent, dribbled about like the tail

of a paper kite, taking precedence according to their several degrees. First old Solomon, a great black and white hound, with a strong resemblance to a mugger's mastiff, gave a howl and a towl; then Harmony chirped, and Manager gave a squeak, and old Solomon threw his tongue again, in a most leisurely and indifferent manner, causing some of the young hounds to peep over the furze bushes to see what was going on.

The run, however, was of short continuance; after crossing three grass fields they came to a greasy fallow, across which the hounds were working the scent very deliberately, when up jumped a great thumping hare, which they ran into in view at the well at the corner. Our sportsmen were somewhat disgusted at this, but made the best of the matter, and laid the mishap to the charge of the horse in the morning.

After consuming another hour or two in drawing hopeless covers, and riding about the country, they entered Handley Cross just in full tide, when all the streets and shops swarmed with bright eyes and smart dresses, and each man said they had had a capital day's sport, and killed. After passing through the principal streets, the hounds and horses were dismissed, and the red coats were seen flitting about till dusk.

The next day, however, produced no change for the better, nor the following, nor the one after; and the oftener they went, the wilder and

worse the hounds became. Sometimes, by dint of mobbing, they managed to kill a fox, but hares much more frequently fell a prey to the renowned pack. At length they arrived at such a state of perfection, that they would hunt almost any thing. The fields, as may be supposed, soon dwindled down to nothing, and, what was worse, many of the visitors began to slip away from Handley Cross without paying their subscriptions. To add to their misfortunes, bills poured in a-pace for poultry and other damage; and every farmer's wife who had her hen-roost robbed, laid the blame upon the foxes. Fleeceall had the first handling of the bills, but not being a man with a propensity for settling questions, he entered into a voluminous correspondence with the parties for the laudable purpose of proving that foxes did not meddle with poultry.

One evening as our masters returned home, quite dispirited after an unusually bad day, without having seen a fox; and the hounds having run into and killed a fat wether, and seized an old woman in a scarlet cloak, they agreed to meet after dinner, to consider what was best to be done under the circumstances. On entering the room, which they did simultaneously, two letters were seen on the table, one of small size, directed to "The Gentlemen Managers of the Handley Cross Hunt-Ball and Supper," containing, in a few laconic items, the appalling

amount of £290. 3s. 6d. for the expences of the memorable ball-night. The other more resembled a government-office packet than a letter, and was bound with red tape and sealed; it was addressed to the "Honourable the Committee of Management of the Handley Cross Fox Hounds." Barnington, more stout-nerved than his colleagues, tore off the tape, when out of the envelope fell a many-paged bill, secured at the stiching part with a delicate piece of blue silk. The contents ran thus:—

The Honourable Committee of Management of the Handley Cross Fox-hounds,

To Walter Fleeceall, Dr.

	£.	s.	d.
Sept. Attending you by especial appointment, when you communicated your desire of taking the Hounds	0	13	4
Considering the subject very attentively .	1	1	0
Attending Capt Doleful, M.C., at Miss Jelly's, the Pastry Cook's, conferring with him on the subject, when it was arranged that a Public Meeting of the Inhabitants should be called	0	13	4
Drawing notice of the same . . .	1	1	0
Making two fair copies thereof . .	0	10	6
Posting same at Library and Billiard Room .	0	6	8
Long attendance on Capt. Doleful, M. C., arranging preliminaries, when it was agreed that Mr. Barnington should be called to the chair	0	13	4
Carry forward	£4	19	2

	£.	s.	d.
Brought up	4	19	2
Communicating with Mr. Barnington thereon, and advising him what to say . .	1	1	0
Attending Meeting, self and clerk . .	1	10	6
Making speech on the merits and advantages of Fox-hunting, (what you please), .			
Making minute of the appointment of the committee of manage m	0	6	8
Attending Capt. Doleful, M. C., by especial appointment at Miss Jelly's, when it appearing advisable to conciliate the farmers, writing to Mr. Stephen Dumpling, requesting his attendance	0	6	8
Attending meeting, when Mr. Dumpling's name was added to the committee, and title of hunt changed to "Handley Cross" Hounds	1	1	0
Making special minute thereof, and of appointment of self as secretary . .	0	10	6
Writing 353 letters soliciting subscriptions, inviting and exhorting gentlemen to become members of the hunt, describing the uniforms, scarlet coats with blue collars in a morning, and sky-blue coats lined with pink silk, canary-coloured shorts, and white silk stockings in an evening, (letters very long and very pressing)	25	0	0
Writing 129 rejoinders to 129 answers from 129 gentlemen who did not readily come into the thing, pointing out the merits and advantages of fox-hunting in general, and of the Handley Cross fox-hunt in particular	10	0	0
Carry forward	£44	15	6

	£	s.	d.
Brought up	44	15	6
Seven gentlemen refusing to subscribe on the grounds that the hounds would hunt hare, drawing long and special affidavit that they were true to fox, and would not look at hare	2	2	0
Attending swearing same, and paid for oaths .	0	6	8
Three gentlemen refusing to become members unless the hounds were allowed to run hare occasionally, writing to assure them their wishes would be complied with . .	1	1	0
Mr. Spinnage having written to say he could not subscribe unless they occasionally hunted stags, writing to assure him that they were stag-hounds, quite as much as fox hounds	0	6	8
Mrs. Margery Mumbleby having sent in a bill of 1l. 8s. 6d. for four hens, a duck, and a goose, stolen by the foxes, consulting sporting records to see whether foxes were in the habit of doing such things, engaged all day, and paid Mr. Hookem, the librarian, for searching through his Sporting Magazines	2	2	0
Writing Mrs. Margery Mumbleby very fully thereon, and stating my firm conviction that it was not the foxes (copy to keep) .	0	13	4
Mrs. Margery Mumbleby not being satisfied with my answer, drawing case for the opinion of the Editor of the New Sporting Magazine, three brief sheets . . .	1	11	6
Paid carriage of parcel and booking .	0	3	4
Paid him and secretary . . .	2	4	6
Carried forward	£55	6	6

	£	s.	d.
Brought up	55	6	6
Carriage of parcel back, containing Editor's answer, who said he had no doubt the foxes were "two-legged" ones . . .	0	3	0
Fair copy of answer for Mrs. Margery Mumbleby, and writing her fully thereon, (copy to keep)	0	6	8
Hearing that Dennis O'Brian, Esq, was going to visit his castle in Ireland, calling at his lodgings to receive the amount of his subscription prior to his departure, when the maid-servant said, her master was not at home			
Calling again, same answer			
Ditto ditto			
Ditto ditto			
Ditto ditto			
Ditto ditto, when the servant said Mr. O'Brian had left this morning .			
Much mental anxiety, postage, parcels, letters, &c., not before charged (what you please)			
Total	£85	16	2

It is but justice to Mr. Fleeceall's accurate method of transacting business, to state that on the creditor side was 18l. 18s. for six subscriptions received, and a very *promising* list of gentlemen who had not yet found it convenient to pay, amounting in the whole to some 300l.

The two bills, however, sealed the fate of the committee of management, and drove the slaugh-

tered wether and scarlet-cloaked old woman of the morning out of their recollections.

Shocked at his situation, Stephen Dumpling took the white-legged chesnut to Duncan Nevin, but though that worthy admitted that he was varry like the field, neither his long tail, nor his flowing mane, would induce him to offer more than twenty-five pounds for him.

"I really have more horses than I can do with," repeated Mr. Nevin, "had you come last week, or the week afore, I had three gentlemen wanting horses for the season, and I could have given you more, for I should have got him kept till April, and there may be a vast of frost or snow before then, but it would not do for me to have him standing eating his head off; you know I've nothing to do with the weather," added he, "when they are once let." Had Duncan known how things stood, he would not have offered him more than ten.

Fortunately for Stephen, Smith and Barnington being both in high credit, the chesnut was saved from the "Nimrod livery and bait stables." Still the committee was at an end, and that soon became known. "Who now was to take the hounds?" was the universal inquiry, which no one could answer. The visitors looked to the townspeople to make the move, and the townspeople wished to give them precedence. With

the uninitiated, the main qualification for a master appears to be "plenty of money." With them the great sporting objection of "he knows nothing about hunting," is unheard of.

The case was urgent and the emergency great. None of the committee would touch again, and there was no engagement to hunt out the season. Puff paragraphs were tried in the Handley Cross Paul Pry, a gossiping publication, which enlivened the lists of arrivals, departures, changes of residence, parties given, &c. with what it called the "sports of the chase," but without success. Some, to be sure, nibbled, and made inquiries as to expence and subscription, but their ultimatums were always in the negative! Sky blue coats and pink linings were likely to be at a discount.

In the midst of the dilemma, Captain Doleful's anxious mind, quickened by self interest, hit upon a gentleman made for the place—rich as Crœsus, a keen and scientific sportsman—an out-and-out lover of hunting—every thing in fact that they wanted. His face wrinkled like a Norfolk biffin with delight, and he summoned Fleececall, Hookem, the librarian, Boltem, the billiard table keeper, to Miss Jelly's; where, over a tray of hot mutton pies, most magnanimously furnished at his own expence, he arranged the scheme disclosed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

"A man he was to all the country dear."

"WHERE can that be from, Binjimin?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks of his boy of all-work, as the latter presented him with a large double-headed letter, with a flourishing coat of arms seal.

Mr. Jorrocks was a great city grocer of the old school, one who was neither ashamed of his trade, nor of carrying it on in a dingy warehouse that would shock the managers of the fine mahogany-countered, gilt-canistered establishment of modern times. He had been in business long enough to remember each succeeding lord mayor before he was any body—"reg'lar little tuppences in fact," as he used to say. Not that Mr. Jorrocks decried the dignity of civic honour, but his ambition took a different turn. He was for the field, and not for the forum.

As a merchant he stood high—country traders took his teas without tasting, and his bills were as good as bank notes. Though an unlettered man he had great powers of thought and expression

in his peculiar way. He was "highly respectable," as they say on 'Change—that is to say, he was very rich, the result of prudence and economy—not that he was stingy, but his income outstripped his expenses, and money like snow rolls up amazingly fast.

A natural born sportsman, his lot being cast behind a counter instead of in the country, is one of those frolics of fortune that there is no accounting for. To remedy the error of the blind goddess, Mr. Jorrocks had taken to hunting as soon as he could keep a horse, and though his exploits had been confined to the suburban county of Surrey, he should rather be "credit'd" for keenness in following the sport in so unpropitious a region, than "debit'd" as a cockney and laughed at for his pains. But here the old adage of "where ignorance is bliss, &c." came to his aid, for never having seen any better country than Surrey, he became impressed with the conviction that it was the "werry best," and their hounds the finest in England.

"Doesn't the best of every thing come to London?" he would ask, "and doesn't it follow as a nattaral consequence, that the best 'unting is to be had from it?"

Moreover, Mr. Jorrocks looked upon Surrey as the peculiar province of Cockneys—we beg pardon—Londoners.—His earliest recollections

carried him back to the days of Alderman Harley, and though his participation in the sport consisted in reading the meets in a boot-maker's window in the Borough, he could tell of all the succeeding masters, and criticise the establishments of Clayton, Snow, Maberly, and the renowned Daniel Haigh.

It was during the career of the latter great sportsman, that Mr. Jorrocks shone a brilliant meteor in the Surrey hunt—he was no rider, but with an almost intuitive knowledge of the run of a fox, would take off his hat to him several times in the course of a run. No Saturday seemed perfect unless Mr. Jorrocks was there; and his great chesnut horse, with his master's coat-laps flying out beyond his tail, will long be remembered on the outline of the Surrey hills. These are recollections that many will enjoy, nor will their interest be diminished as time throws them back in the distance. Many bold sportsmen, now laid on the shelf, and many a bold one still going, will glow with animation at the thoughts of the sport they shared in with him.

Of the start before day break—the cries of the cads—the mirth of the lads—the breakfasts at Croydon—the dear "Derby Arms,"—the cheery Charley Morton*—then the ride to the meet—

* Charley—mine host of the Derby Arms—was more given to venison than fox.

the jovial greeting—the glorious find, and the exhilirating scrambles up and down the Surrey hills—Then if they killed!—O, joy! unutterable joy! How they holloaed! How they hooped! How they lugged out their half-crowns for Tom Hill, and returned to town flushed with victory and *eau de vie*.

But we wander:—

At the time of which we speak Mr. Jorrocks had passed the grand climacteric, and balancing his age with less accuracy than he balanced his books, called himself somewhere between fifty and sixty. He was a stiff, square-built, middle-sized man, with a thick neck and a large round head. A woolly broad-brimmed lowish-crowned hat sat with a jaunty side-long sort of air upon a bushy nut-brown wig, worn for comfort and not deception. Indeed his grey whiskers would have acted as a contradiction if he had, but deception formed no part of Mr. Jorrocks's character. He had a fine open countenance, and though his turn up nose, little grey eyes, and rather twisted mouth, were not handsome, still there was a combination of fun and good humour in his looks that pleased at first sight, and made one forget all the rest. His dress was generally the same—a puddingey white neckcloth tied in a knot, capacious shirt frill (shirt made without collars), a single-breasted high-collared

buff waistcoat with covered buttons, a blue coat with metal ones, dark blue stockingnet pantaloons, and hessian boots with large tassels, displaying the liberal dimensions of his well-turned limbs. The coat pockets were outside, and the back buttons far apart.

His business place was in St. Botolph's Lane, in the city, but his residence was in Great Coram Street. This is rather a curious locality, city people considering it west, while those in the west consider it east. The fact is that Great Coram Street is somewhere about the centre of London, near the London University, and not a great way from the Euston station of the Birmingham railway. Approaching it from the east which seems the proper way of advancing to a city man's residence, you pass the Foundling Hospital in Guildford Street, cross Brunswick Square, and turning short to the left you find yourself in "Great Coram Street." Neat unassuming houses form the sides, and the west end is graced with a building that acts the double part of a reading-room and swimming bath—"literature and lavement" is over the door.

In this region the dazzling glare of civic pomp and courtly state are equally unknown. Fifteen-year-old foot boys in cotton velveteens, and variously fitting coats, being the objects of ambi-

tion, while the rattling of pewter pots about four o'clock denote the usual dinner hour.—It is a nice quiet street, highly popular with Punch and other public characters. A smart confectioner's in the neighbourhood, leads one to suppose that it is a favourite locality for citizens.

We may as well introduce the other inmates of Mr. Jorrocks's house, before we return to our story, premising that they are now going to act a prominent part.

Mrs. Jorrocks was the reverse of her husband in all except figure. She was a commonish-minded woman with great pretension and smattering of gentility. She had been reckoned a beauty at Tooting, but had outlived all, save the recollection of it—she was a dumpy figure, very fond of fine bonnets, and dressed so differently that Mr. Jorrocks himself sometimes did not know her.—Her main characteristics were a red snub nose, a profusion of false ringlets, and gooseberry eyes.

She had married Mr. Jorrocks for his money, and he, like many mercantile men in early life, not having had much leisure to look about him, had taken her without any very exact knowledge of her character. Fortunately most of her female acquaintance being like herself, the worthy man never discovered the inferiority of his spouse.

No children blessed the union, and a niece, the orphan daughter of a brother of Mr. Jorrocks, formed their family circle. Belinda Jorrocks was just entering upon womanhood—young, beautiful, and guileless, even the polishing properties of a finishing seminary had failed to contaminate the innate goodness of her heart.—In person she was of the middle size, neither too slim nor too stout, but just of that plump and pleasantly rounded form that charms all eyes, whether admirers of the tall or short. Her light brown silken hair clasped the ivory forehead of a beautiful oval face, while the delicate regularity of her lightly-pencilled eyebrows, contrasted with the long rich fringe of her large blue eyes—rosy lips and pearly teeth appeared below her Grecian nose, while her clear though somewhat pale complexion, brightened with the flush of animation when she spoke. Her waist was small, and her feet sylph like.

"Where can this be from, Binjimin?" inquired Mr Jorrocks taking the letter before mentioned as he sat in his red morocco hunting chair in the back drawing room in Great Coram Street.

"Sandley Cross!" where is that!" said he, looking at the post-mark, "Knows no one there I think," continued he, cutting the paper on each side of the seal with a pair of large scissors kept in the capacious black inkstand before him.

Having opened the envelope, a large sheet of white paper and a gilt-edged pink satin paper note presented themselves. He opened the note first.—The writing was unknown to him, so he took up the other, and folding it out proceeded to read the contents.—Thus it run—

"To John Jorrocks, Esq.

"Honoured Sir,

"The committee of management of the Handley Cross fox-hounds being under the necessity of relinquishing their undertaking, we, the undersigned keen and determined sportsmen, having experienced the evils of a divided mastership, and feeling fully impressed with the importance of having a country hunted single-handed by a gentleman of known talent and experience, who will command the respect and obedience of his followers and the admiration of the world, look up to you, sir, as pre-eminently qualified for the distinguished, honourable, and much coveted situation

"My vig!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks jumping from his chair, slapping his thigh and hopping round the table, taking up three or four holes of his face with delight—"My vig! who would ever have thought of such a thing!—O, John Jorrocks! John Jorrocks! you are indeed a most fortunate man! a most lucky dog!—O dear!—

O dear!—Was ever any thing so truly delightful!" Some seconds elapsed ere our worthy friend could compose himself sufficiently to look again at the letter.—At last he resumed.

"When we consider, sir," it continued, "the brilliant position you have long achieved in that most illustrious of all hunts 'the Surrey,' and the glorious character you have gained as an ardent admirer of field sports, we feel most deeply and sincerely sensible that there is no one to whom we can more safely confide this important trust than yourself."

"Capital! bravo! werry good indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, laying down the letter again for the purpose of digesting what he had read. "Capital indeed," he repeated, nursing one leg over the other and casting his eyes up at a dirty fly-catcher dangling over his head.—Thus he sat for some moments in mute abstraction—at length he let down his leg and took up the letter.

"In conclusion, sir," it ended—"we beg to assure you that you possess alike the confidence and esteem of the inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood, and in the event of your acceding to our wishes and becoming the manager of our magnificent hunt, we pledge ourselves to afford you our most cordial and strenuous support,

and to endeavour by every means in our power to make you master of the Handley Cross foxhounds, at the smallest possible expense and inconvenience to yourself.

(Signed,) Miserrimus Doleful, M. C.
Captain half-pay.
Duncan Nevin.
Alfred Boltem.
Simon Hookem.
Walter Fleeceall.
Judas Turnbill.
Michael Grasper."

"Capital indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, laying down the letter, clapping and rubbing his hands—"werry good indeed—most beautiful in fact—wot honour, I arrive at—wonder what these chaps are now," added he, saying which, in taking up the letter his eye caught the pink satin paper note. It was in the same fine lady like running hand as the letter, and purported to be from Captain Doleful, explanatory of their motives, and vouching for the respectability of himself and brother requisitionists. Mr. Jorrocks was all delight, and being the child of impulse and generous feelings, his joy found vent in stamping on the floor, thereby summoning his servant the aforesaid Benjamin into his presence.

Benjamin, or Binjimin as Mr. Jorrocks pronounced the name, was one of those mischievous urchins that people sometimes persuade themselves do the work of a man without the wages. He was a stunted, pasty-faced, white-headed, ginnified boy, that might be any age from eight to eighteen, and as idle and mischievous a brat as it was possible to conceive, sharp as a needle and quick as lightning, he was far more than a match for his over easy master, whom he cheated and deceived in every possible way.—Whatever went wrong, Benjamin always had an excuse for it, which generally transferred the blame from his own to some one else's shoulders; a piece of ingenuity that required no small degree of dexterity, inasmuch as the light-porter of the warehouse, Betsey, a maid of all work, and a girl under her, were all he had to divide it among.—Not a note came into the house, or a letter went out of it, but Benjamin mastered its contents; and Mrs. Jorrocks was constantly losing things out of the store-room and closets, which never could be traced to any body.

One unlucky Sunday morning, indeed, Mr. Jorrocks happened to turn back suddenly on his way to church, and caught him sitting in his easy chair at the breakfast table reading Bell's Life in London, and scooping the marmalade out

of the pot with his thumb, when he visited Benjamin's back with a summary horse-whipping; but that was the only time, during a period of three years, that he ever was caught in a scrape he could not get out of.—This might be partly attributable to Betsey finding it convenient to be in with Benjamin, who winked at the visits of a genteel young man from a neighbouring haberdasher's. The poor maid under Betsey, and the light porter, who was generally absent, were therefore the usual scape-goats, or somebody else's servant, who had happened to come with a message or parcel. Such was Mr. Jorrocks's domestic establishment, which, like most masters, he either thought, or affected to think, very perfect.

We left our friend stamping for Benjamin, who made his appearance as soon as he could slip down stairs and come up again, he having been watching his master through the key-hole since delivering the letter.

* * * *

"Now, Binjimin," said Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing him with one of his benevolent looks, and not knowing exactly what to say—"Now, Binjimin," he repeated, "Are the 'osses all right?"

"Yes, sir, and the wehicle too."

"Werry good," replied Mr. Jorrocks—"werry

good," taking a half-emptied pot of Lazenby's marmalade, out of a drawer in his library table. "See now! there's a pot of marmey*lad* for you," (Mr. Jorrock's had the knack of making the most of what he did, and treated the half pot as a whole one), and mind be a good *boy*, and I make no doubt you'll rise to be a werry great man—nothing gains man or *boy* the respect and esteem of the world, so much as honesty, sobriety, and cleanliness."

Mr. Jorrocks paused—He would have finished with a moral, wherein his own fortune should have furnished the example, but somehow or other, he could not turn it at the moment, so after scrutinizing Benjamin's dirty face for a second, he placed the marmalade pot in his hand, and said, "now go and wesh your mug."

Uncommonly amiable and consequential was Mr. Jorrocks that morning. As he walked, or rather strutted into the city, he gave twopence to every crossing-sweeper in his line, from the black-eyed wench at the corner of Brunswick Square, to the breechless boy, with the red night cap, at St. Botolph's Lane end; and he entered his dark and dingy warehouse with a smile on his brow, enough to illumine the dial of St. Giles's clock in a fog. Most fidgetty and uneasy was he all the morning—every foot-fall made his eyes start

from the ledger, and wander towards the door, in hopes of seeing some member of the Surrey, or some brother sportsman, to whom he might communicate the great intelligence. He went on 'Change with a hand in each breeches pocket, and a strut that plainly told how well he was to do with himself—still some dear-bought experience had given him a little prudence, and all things considered, he determined to sleep on the invitation before he answered it—Perhaps the pro's and con's of his mind will be best displayed by a transcript of what he wrote:—

"Gentlemen,

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 4th, and note the contents which I assure you is most grateful to my feelings—in all you have said, I most cordially goinside.—It's pleasant to see humanity estimating one's walue at the price one sets on oneself. I am a sportsman all over, and to the back-bone—'Unting is all that's worth living for—all time is lost wot is not spent in 'unting—it is like the hair we breathe—if we have it not we die—it's the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt, and only five-and twenty per cent of its danger.

"I've no manner of doubt at all, that I'm fully qualified for the mastership of the 'Andley Cross

fox-hounds, or any other—'unting has been my 'obby ever since I could keep an 'oss, and long before—a southerly wind and a cloudy sky are my delight—no music like the melody of 'ounds. But enough of the rhapsodies, let us come to the melodies—The £. s. d. in fact. Wot will it cost?—In course it's a subscription pack—then say how many *paying* subscribers have you? Wot is the *nett* amount of their subscriptions how many couple of 'ounds have you? Are they steady? Are they musical? How many days a week do you want your country 'unted? Is stopping expensive? Is the country stiff or light? Are your cover's wide of the kennel? Where is your kennel? I never heard of your 'ounds before—wot stabling have you? Is 'ay and corn costly? In course you'll have your stock of meal by you? Are there any cover-rents to pay—and if so, who pays them? How are you off for foxes—write me fully—fairly—freely—frankly, in fact, and believe me to remain, gentlemen, all your's to serve,

"John Jorrocks.

"Great Coram Street, London

"To Miserrimus Doleful, Esq., M. C.
Captain Half-pay, Handley Cross."

* * * *

"Well, come this is more like business than any

we have had yet," observed Captain Doleful on reading the epistle—"though some of his questions will be plaguy troublesome to answer."—"What does he mean by 'are they steady?'—'Are they musical?' and as to the 'stopping being expensive,' of course that must depend a good deal upon how he lives, and whether he stops at an inn or not—It's a pity but I knew something about the matter, that I might make a satisfactory answer."

Fleeceall had Blaine's Encyclopædia of Rural Sports, but as he was thought rather too sharp, Doleful determined to try what they could do without him; accordingly, he concocted the following epistle, which having copied on to a sheet of sea-green paper, he sealed with yellow wax, and deposited in the post—

"Dear Mr. Jorrocks,

"Your kind and flattering letter has just come to hand, and I lose not a moment in supplying you with all the information in my power, relative to our celebrated dogs. Unfortunately the secretary to the hunt, Mr. Fleeceall, is absent on urgent business, consequently I have not access to those documents which would enable me to answer you as fully as I could wish. The dogs, as you doubtless know, are of the purest blood,

having been the property for many years of that renowned sportsman, Michael Hardey, and are bred with the very greatest care and attention. It is perhaps not going too far to say that there is not such another pack in the world. There are at present thirty-two couple of old ones, in kennel, besides an excellent white terrier with a black eye. They are very steady and most musical. Their airing yard adjoins the Ebenezer chapel, and when the saints begin to sing, the dogs join chorus. Handley Cross, where the kennel is situated, is in the most beautiful, fertile, and salubrious part of the country, within two miles of the Datton station of the Lily-white-sand railway, and contains a chalybeate spa of most unrivalled excellence. The following is an accurate analysis of the water, taken by an eminent French physician, who came all the way from Rheims for the express purpose of examining it.

ONE PINT, (Wine measure.)

Sulphate of Soda	21	Grains
——————— Magnesia	3½	
Sulphate of Lime	4¼	do.
Muriate of Soda	9¼	do,
Oxide of Iron	1	do.
Carbonic Acid	1¼	do.

"To this unrivalled spring, invalids from every

part of the world, from every quarter of the globe, flock in countless numbers; and it is unnecessary to point out to a sportsman like yourself either the advantages that a pack of hounds confer on such a place, or the benefits accruing to the master from having the support of men with whom, to use a familiar phrase, "money is no object." Indeed I think I may safely say, that keenness is all that is required, and a gentleman like you would meet with support that would galvanize your most sanguine expectations. You must excuse my saying more at the present, as I have been out since day-break, and there is a piece of cold roast beef standing before me at this moment, whose beautifully marbled side, and rich yellow fat with a delicately browned outside, in conjunction with a crisp lettuce-salad in a china bowl, peremptorily order me to conclude, which I do with the earnest exhortation for you at once to declare yourself for the high honour of the mastership of the Handley Cross hounds. Believe me to remain in extreme hunger, dear Mr. Jorrocks, very sincerely your's,

MISERRIMUS DOLEFUL, M. C.,
Handley Cross. Capt. half-pay."

"Dash my vig!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, laying down the letter, "what prime beef that must

be! By jingo I almost fancy I see the joint, with the nice, curly, crisp, brown 'orse radish, sticking to it in all directions.—I knows nothing better than *good* cold roast, tinged with red from the gravy in the centre.—Doleful must be a trump —feel as if I knew him. Keen fellow too—Peep-of-day boy—Dare say he found the fox by the drag—Oh, vot joy is that! Nothing to compare to it—Might as well have told me more about the 'ounds though too," he observed, as a glimmering of caution shot across his mind—"Should like to have a fair black and wite understan'in' what they are to cost. I'm rich to be sure, but then a man wot's made his own money likes to see to the spending of it." Thereupon Mr. Jorrocks stuck his hands under his coat-laps and paced thoughtfully up and down the apartment, waving them sportively like the tail of a dolphin. Having pulled his wig about in all directions, he at last composed himself at his table, and drew up the following reply.

"Dear Doleful,

"Your agreeable favour has come to hand, and werry pleasant it is. It appears to be directed to two points—the salubriosity of 'Andley Cross, and the excellence of the 'ounds. On the first point I'm content—I make no doubt the water's

capital. Please tell me more about the 'ounds and country—Are you quite certain that people will not be backward in coming forward with the coin—I've lived a long while in the world—say a liberal half hundred—and I've never yet found money good to get—So long as it consists of pen, ink, and paper work, it comes in like the ocean: many men can't help putting their names down to subscription lists, just as others can't help nodding at an auction, but confound it, when you come to gether in the doit's, there's an awful falling off. Howsomever, you should know best, and suppose now, as you seem full of confidence, you underwrite me for so much, according to the number of days you want the country 'unted.

"Turn this over in your mind and let me know what you think of it; also please tell me more about the 'ounds, and country, for in fact as yet I knows nothing. Are there many old hounds in the pack? Are there many young ones to come in? What size are they? Are they level? Do they carry a good head? Have they plenty of bone? Cook says a weedy hound is only fit to 'unt a cat in a kitchen—I says ditto to that. What sort of condition are they in? Can they trot out fifteen miles or so, 'unt and come back with their sterns up? How are you off for foxes? Do you ever hunt a bagman? Again I say, write to me with-

out reserve—quite freely in fact, and believe me, &c.

Your's to serve,

JOHN JORROCKS.

Great Coram Street, London."

"To Miserrimus Doleful, Esq., M. C.,
Capt. Half-pay, Handley Cross Spa."

This letter was a poser, for the worthy M. C. had no notion of running risks, neither had he the knowledge necessary for supplying the information Mr. Jorrocks required, still he saw the absolute necessity of persevering in the negociation, as there was no probability of any one else coming forward. In this dilemma, it occurred to him that a bold stroke might be the policy, and obviate further trouble.

Accordingly he wrote as follows :—

"Dear Mr. Jorrocks,

"Your's is just received.—I was on the point of writing to you when it came—A rival has appeared for the mastership of the hounds—a great nabob with a bad liver, to whom the doctors have recommended strong horse-exercise, has arrived with four posters, and an influential party is desirous of getting the hounds for him. Money is evidently no object—he gave each post-boy a half-sovereign, and a blind beggar two-

and sixpence. I have protested most strongly against his being even *thought* of until your final decision is known, which pray give immediately, and, for your own sake, let it be in the affirmative. I can write no more —My best energies shall be put in requisition to counteract the sinister proceedings of others. Pray write immediately—No time is to be lost—In the great haste,

Faithfully yours,
Miserrimus Doleful, M. C.
Capt. Half-pay."

"To John Jorrocks, Esq.
Great Coram Street, London."

This letter was a sad puzzler to our worthy friend. In his eyes a mastership of fox-hounds was the highest pinnacle of ambition, and the situation was the more desirable at that moment from a seism in the Surrey hunt, and the apparent decadence of that establishment. Still long experience had tinctured his naturally ardent and impetuous mind with some degree of caution, and he felt the importance of having some sort of a bargain before entering upon what he well knew was an onerous and expensive undertaking. The pro's and con's he weighed and turned over in his mind, and the following letter was the result of his cogitations:—

"Dear Doleful,

"I will candidly confess, as Raphiel said to Daniel, that to be a master of fox-'ounds, or M. F. H., would be a werry high step in the ladder of my hambition, but still like Raphiel, I should not like to pay too dear for my whistle. I doesn't wish to disparage the walue of your Nabob, but this I may say, that no man with a bad liver will ever make a good 'untsman. An 'untsman, or M. F. H. should have a good disgestion, with a cheerful countenance, and, moreover, should know when to use the clean and when the dirty side of his tongue—when to butter a boobey, and when to snub a snob. He should also be indifferent as to weather, and Nabobs all come from the east, where it is werry 'ot—all sunshine and no fogs.

"Again, if I am right, they hunt the jackall, not at all a sporting animal, I should say, from the specimen in the Zoologicals. Still, as I said before, I doesn't wish to disparage the walue of your Nabob, who may be a werry good man, and have more money and less wit than myself. If he is to have the 'ounds, well and good—I can go on as I have been doing, with the old Surrey. If I'm to have them, I should like to know a little more about the £. s. d. Now—tell me candidly, like a good fellow, wot you think

they'll cost, and wot can be raised in the way of subscription. Of course a man that's raised to the lofty position of an M. F. H., must expect to pay something for the honour, and so far from wishing to live out of the 'ounds, I am well disposed to do what is liberal, but then I should like to know the extent of my liability. Dignity, in my mind, should not be too cheap, but between you and I and the wall I rather mistrust a water-drinker. To be sure there be two sorts, those that drink it to save the expense of treating themselves with aught better, and those wot undergo water for the purpose of bringing their stomachs round to stand something stronger—Now if a man drinks water for pleasure, he should not be trusted, and ought to be called upon for his subscription in advance; but if he drinks water because he has worn out his inside by strong libations, in all humane probability he will be a good sort of fellow, and his subscription will be underwritten for a trifle. All this may be matter of no moment to a Nabob, but to a man vot's risen from indigence to affluence by the exertions of his own head, it is of importance, and I should like to know wery particularly how many of the subscribers are woluntary water-drinkers, and how many are drinkers from necessity.

"I am, as you doubtless know, a grocer, in a large way of business, wholesale and retail, importing direct from China, which I suppose will be the country your Nabob comes from, and unfortunately at the present writing, my junior partner, Simon Simpkins, senior, is on a trading tour, and I can't well be wanted at the shop, otherwise I would run down and have a personal interview with you; but I had a letter this morning from Huddersfield in which he says he will be back as on Friday at farthest, therefore as the season is spending and the 'ounds should be kept going, I could, should your answer be agreeable, run down on the Saturday and make arrangements for taking the field immediately—Of course I presume there is every thing ready for the purpose, and a master is all wot is wanted, for I only keep two 'osses—what the lawyers call *qui tam*'ers, 'osses that ride as well as drive,' and they would only do for my own riding. I have a sharp lad that might make a second whip, and my establishment consists of Mrs. Jorrocks, my niece, Belinda, Betsay, the maid, and Binjimin, the boy. Of course Mrs. J. as the wife of the M. F. H. would expect proper attention.

"I shall want a comfortable house to accommodate this party, and if I could get one with stabling attached, it would be agreeable—Perhaps you may know something of the sort, the

willa style would be agreeable. I think that's all I've got to say—indeed I haven't paper for more, so shall conclude for self and partners.

Your's to serve,

JOHN JORROCKS."

"To Miserrimus Doleful, Esq, M. C.,
Capt. Half-pay, Handley Cross Spa."

Doleful was in ecstacies when he got this letter, for he plainly saw the Nabob had told upon Mr. Jorrocks, and that he was fairly entering the meshes of his net. The letter indeed was unexceptionable, save the mention of his avocation of a grocer, which Doleful determined to keep to himself, and merely announce him as a gentleman of large fortune whose father had been connected with trade. Recollecting that Diana Lodge was to let, he forthwith secured the refusal of it at three guineas a week, and calling on Fleeceall, concocted a most flattering list of subscribers and members of the hunt, which he forwarded to Mr. Jorrocks with the following letter:

"Dear Mr. Jorrocks,

"By the greatest good luck in the world Diana Lodge, within a stone's throw of the kennel, came vacant this morning, and not having the slightest doubt that on inspection of the accompanying list of subscribers to the hounds and

members of our celebrated hunt, which you will see by the letters A. and B. prefixed to their names, contain very few of those most horrible characters water-drinkers from choice, you will immediately accept the honourable office of 'Master,' I have engaged it for you at the very moderate rent of four guineas a week, *including every thing*. It is a cottage ornée, as you say in France, entered by an ivy-covered trellis-work arch, tastefully entwined with winter roses, now in full blow. In the passage is a highly polished Honduras mahogany table on claw feet castors, for hats, whips, gloves, cigar cases, &c. On the right is a dining-room of comfortable dimensions, with another Honduras mahogany table, capable of dining eight people (the number the late Mr. Walker, author of that clever work 'The Original,' declared to be the orthodox size for a party) with a Honduras mahogany cellaret side-board with patent-locks, and a dumb-waiter on castors. The carpet is a Turkey one, and the rug a Kidderminster, of a pattern to match the carpet. On the left of the passage is a drawing-room of the same size as the dining-room, furnished in a style of unparalleled elegance.

"The chairs, ten in number, are of massive imitation rosewood with beaded and railed backs and round knobs along the tops, and richly carved legs. In the centre is a beautiful round imitation

rosewood table on square lion-clawed brass castors, and the edge of the table is deeply inlaid with a broad circle of richly carved highly-polished brass. Against the wall, below a costly round mirror, supported by a bronze eagle in chains, is a square imitation rosewood table inlaid with satin wood in lines, containing two drawers on each side, with ivory knobs for handles. The carpet is a fine flowered pattern, richer than any thing I can describe, and the whole is wonderfully complete and surpassingly elegant.

"There are four bed-rooms and a dressing-room, which holds a bed and a kitchen, back kitchen, scullery, pantry, and other conveniences. To the back is a nice little outlet of a quarter of an acre, laid out in the style of the Jardin de Plants at Paris, and there is a splendid old patriarch of a peacock, that struts about the walls, spreads his tail, and screams delightfully. In short it appears to me to have been built with an eye to the residence of a master of hounds.

"And this leads me to tell you that the Nabob has been to the kennel, attended by two Negroes, one of whom held a large green parasol over his head to protect him from the sun, while the other carried a Chinchilla fur-lined, blue silk cloak to guard him from the cold. I hear he talked very big about hunting and elephant riding, and said the waters here had done his

liver a vast deal of good. I may observe that it is possible an attempt may be made by a few troublesome fellows to place him at the head of the establishment, particularly if you any longer delay appearing among us; my advice to you therefore is, to place yourself, your amiable lady, and accomplished niece, with your servants, horses, &c., on the mid-day Lily-white-sand train, on Friday next, and make a public entry and procession from the Datton station into Handley Cross, showering half-pence among the little boys as you go. I will take upon myself to muster and marshal such a procession as will have an imposing appearance, and the Nabob will be a very bold man if he makes any attempt upon the hounds after.

"I need not say that your amiable lady will receive from me, as M. C. of Handley Cross, all those polite attentions that are invariably paid by all well-bred gentlemen in the dignified situation I hold, more particularly from those bearing Her Majesty's Commission in the Army; and in the table of precedence among women, that I have laid down for the regulation of the aristocratic visitors of Handley Cross Spa, the lady of the M. F. H. comes on after the members of the Royal Family, and before all bishops' wives and daughters, peeresses, knights' dames, justices' wives, and so forth. Expecting then to meet

you at the Datton station on the Lily-white-sand railway, at three o'clock on Friday next, and to have the supreme felicity of making the personal acquaintance of a gentleman who so worthily fills so large a space in the world's eye, I have the honour to subscribe myself, with humble respects to the ladies, dear Mr. Jorrocks,

Faithfully your's,

MISERRIMUS DOLEFUL, M. C.,

Capt. Half-pay."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum."—Virg. G. 4. 3.
"A mighty pomp composed of little things."

What a fuss there was preparing for Mr. Jorrocks's reception!—Captain Doleful was perfectly beside himself, and ran about the town as though he expected her Majesty. First he went to the proprietory school, and begged a half holiday for all the little boys and girls; next he visited Mr. Whackem's mathematical seminary, and did the like by his; Miss Prim and Miss Prosey, both promised to "suspend the duties of their respective establishments" for the afternoon; and three infant schools were released from lessons all the day. "Jorrocks for ever," was chalked upon the walls, doors, and shutters, and little children sung out his name in lisping acclamations. Publicans looked cheerful, and livery stable keepers, ostlers, and helpers, talked about the price of hay and corn. Sebastian Mello called a meeting of the Religious Freedom Society, who voted eight-and-twenty shillings for placarding the town with the following comfortable assurance—"Fox-hunters will all go to Hell."

The banner with the fox upon it, and the "Floreat Scientia" scroll, painted for the celebrated ball and supper, was released from the darkness of Mr. Fleeceall's garret, where it had been deposited after the entertainment, and mounted on poles to lead the way in the procession; while the milliners, mantua-makers, and tailors, were severally called upon to contribute silk, calico, and bunting for flags, decorations, and ribbons. Whatever Doleful demanded was necessarily ceded, so absolute was his sway over the tradespeople of the Spa. In every respect he was as great a man as a country mayor. Did a new cheesemonger, or a new hatter, or a new milk-woman, wish to settle in the place, the good will of the M. C. was invariably to be obtained, else it was to little use their troubling themselves to come; and the perquisites and advantages derived from these sources made a comfortable addition to his yearly income, arising from the subscription book at the library. The musicians at the wells were also under his controul, and of course they received intimations to be at the Datton station before the appointed hour that Mr. Jorrocks had privately announced his intention to arrive.

The morning sun broke cheerfully through the clouds in a good, down-rightly, determined fine day, and as Doleful threw open the latticed case-

ment of his window, and his eye roved to the "sun bright summit" of the distant hills, he poured forth an inward ejaculation for the success of the great enterprise of the day, and for his own especial honour and emolument. In the midst of his reverie Jemima, the maid of all work and shop girl of the house, tapped gently at his door, and handed in a three-cornered note written on pink satin paper and highly musked. Doleful started as though he had seen an apparition, for in the hand he immediately recognized the writing of his great patroness, Mrs. Barnington, and the recollection of Mrs. Jorrocks, the table of precedence among women, whereby the latter was to supplant Mrs. Barnington, the baits and allurements he had held out for the purpose of securing the Jorrocks's, together with the honour he was then instigating the inhabitants to do Mr. J., all rushed upon his mind with terrible velocity. Nor did the contents of the note assuage the anguish of his mind. It was simply this: "Mrs. Barnington will thank Capt. Doleful to wait upon her at twenty-three minutes before eleven."

"Twenty-three minutes before eleven!" exclaimed the Captain, throwing up his hands, looking like a condemned criminal—"How *like* her that is! always peremptory with others and never punctual herself; well, there's no help for

it. Jemima," exclaimed he, down the narrow staircase to the girl who had returned to the shop, "my compliments to Mrs. Barnington, and say, I will make a point of being with her at the time she names. I wonder," continued he to himself, pacing up and down his little bed-room in his dressing gown and slippers, "what she can want, it must be about the Jorrocks's—and yet I could not do otherwise than I have. If she storms, I'll rebel, and trounce her for all her airs, by *Jove*, I will!" saying which, he clenched his fist, and, looking in the glass, brushed up the few straggling hairs that marked the place for whiskers, and felt quite valiant. His courage however rather oozed out of his finger ends, as the appointed hour approached, and at twenty-one minutes before eleven by his watch, and twenty-two and a half by the church clock, he arrived at the door of his arbitrary and capricious patroness.

"Mistress is in her Boudoir," said the consequential butler on receiving the Captain at the hands of the footman, "but I'll send up your name. Please step into the parlour," and thereupon he turned the Captain into the dining room, and closed the door upon him.

Towards twelve o'clock, just as the Captain's courage was nearly up again, and he had thrice applied his hand to the ivory knob of the bell-

spring to see which way it turned against he wanted to ring, in strutted the butler again, with "Missis's compliments, sir, and is sorry she is indisposed at present, and hopes it will not be inconvenient to you to return at ten minutes before three."—"Ten minutes before three," exclaimed the Captain as a tinge of colour rose to his pallid cheeks, "impossible!" said he, "*impossible!*" Then recollecting himself he desired the butler to return with his respects to Mrs. Barnington, and say that at any hour next day, he would have great pleasure in waiting upon her, but that his time was completely bespoke for the whole afternoon. The butler forthwith departed, and in about three quarters of an hour, during which time Mrs. Barnington had finished a nap on the sofa, and arranged an elegant neglegé toilette wherein to appear, the butler returned, and with a bow and wave of his hand announced that "Missis would see the Captain," whom he preceded up stairs and handed over to Janette, the French maid, stationed at the door, who ushered the Captain into the presence of Mrs. Barnington in the back drawing room. She was lying in state on a costly many-cushioned crimson and gold ottoman, dressed in a fawn-coloured robe de chambre, with a rich white Cachmere shawl thrown carelessly about her legs

below which, her elegantly-formed feet in pink swan's down-lined slippers protruded. Her morning cap of costly workmanship was ornamented and tied with broad satin cherry-coloured ribbons, which, with the colour of the ottoman and cushions imparted a gentle hue to her clear but delicate complexion, and her bright silky hair flowed in luxuriant tresses from the sides. She was pretending to read the Handley Cross Paul Pry, while with her left hand she kept applying a costly gold vinaigrette to her nose. The room was a mass of jewellery, costly furniture, and absurdities.

"Good morning, Captain," said she, with the slightest possible inclination of her head.—"Janette, set a chair," which she motioned the Captain to occupy, and the maid departed. "Pray," said she, as soon as the door was closed, what is the meaning of all this to do about a Mr. Horrocks, that I read of in this morning's Paul Pry?"

"Mr. Horrocks," replied the Captain, "really marm, I don't know—it's the first time I've heard the name mentioned this long time,—there was a Mr. Horrocks lived in Silenus villa the year before last, but I understood he had gone back to India."

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Barnington, "that's

quite another person these are Londoners—*trades*-people I hear, and the man Horrocks the paper says, is to have the hounds."

"Oh," says the Captain blushing to the tips of his ears, "you've mistaken the name marm. —It's *Jorrocks*—Mister Jorrocks of Great Coram Street—a great merchant—at least his father was. The present Mr. Jorrocks is a mighty sportsman, and hearing the hounds were without a leader, he wrote to offer himself, and some of the sporting gentry of the place have been in treaty with him to take them; but I need not tell you, Mrs. Barnington, that hunting is not an amusement I am partial to, indeed I hope I may never have to go out again; but you know that as Master of the Ceremonies I am obliged to countenance many things that I would gladly avoid."

"True," replied Mrs. Barnington, with a smile of approbation—"I thought *you* would not be likely to encourage vulgar people coming here merely because they dont care for breaking their necks over hedges and ditches—but tell me, isn't there a Mrs. Jorrocks?"

"I understand so," replied the Captain with a hem and a haw; "a lady of birth, they say; but had I known you would have interested yourself in the matter, I should certainly have informed myself so as to have been able to tell you all about her."

"Oh dear no! *not for the world!*—whether as a lady of birth or a tradesman's wife, it would never do for *me* to concern myself about them. *You* know my position here is not to be controverted by any interlopers, be they who they may, —or come from where they will."

"Undoubtedly not, marm," replied the obsequious M. C.; "there's not a person in the place insensible of the advantages of your presence; but I should hope,—at least, perhaps I may venture to express a slight wish,—that if these Jorrocks's appear respectable people, you will for the sake of sociability vouchsafe them the favour of your countenance, and condescend to notice them a *little*."

"I don't know what to say about that, my dear Captain," replied Mrs. Barnington thoughtfully. "If they appear respectable people, and if they live in a certain style, and if I thought the matter would rest at Handley Cross, and they would not obtrude their acquaintance upon me elsewhere, and if they appeared sensible of the obligation, I might perhaps call upon them; but where there are so many points to consider, and so many to ascertain, it is almost needless speculating upon how one might act; all that we can do for the present is to maintain one's own consequence, and *you* know full well the only way to support a place like this, is to uphold the dignity of the chief patroness."

"No doubt," replied Captain Doleful, with a half-suppressed sigh as the table of precedence among women came across his mind. "I am sure, Madam, I have always been most anxious to pay you every respect and attention in my power, and if I have failed it has been owing to the multiplicity of my engagements and duties, and not from any want of inclination on my part."—"I'm sure of it, Captain; and now let us see you back here at dinner at ten minutes past six." "With pleasure," replied the Captain, rising to depart, with a grin of satisfaction on his melancholy visage.

"Stay one moment," resumed Mrs. Barnington, the Captain was leaving the room. "The paper says these people arrive to-day.—If you chance to see them or can find anything out about them, you know, well and good—perhaps *Mr.* Barnington might like to know."

The clear bright beauty of the day, combined with the attraction of a stranger coming to fill so important a situation as master of fox-hounds, drew many to the Datton rail-way station, who were previously unacquainted even with the name of "Jorrocks;" though it is but right to state that the ignorant portion consisted principally of the fair sex, most men, whether sportsmen or not, having heard of his matchless fame and exploits.

All the flys, hack horses, donkeys, and ponies, were bespoke as usual; and many set out at noon day to secure good births at the station. Precisely at two o'clock Captain Doleful appeared at Miss Jelly's door, attired in a dress that would puzzle the "property man" of a theatre. It was nearly the same as he exhibited himself in on the memorable opening day of the committee of management. The old single-breasted militia coat, denuded of its facings and trappings, with a sky blue collar and sky blue linings, and a short, shrivelled, buff kerseymere waistcoat, with mother of-pearl-buttons, old white moleskin breeches, well darned and patched at the knees, and badly cleaned Hessian boots and black heel spurs.—His hands were covered with a pair of dirty-white kid gloves; and in his right one he carried a large hunting whip. An oil-skin covered hat, secured to a button-hole of his waistcoat by a yard of sky blue penny ribbon, completed the rigging of this sporting dandy.

Having withdrawn his countenance and custom from Sam Slickem after the affair of the kicking mare, (the effect of which had been considerably to impoverish Mr. Sam,) of course all the other proprietors of hack horses were on the alert to please the great M. C., and on this day he was mounted by Duncan Nevin on his white mare, Fair Rosamond, who was generally honoured by

carrying pretty Miss Lovelace, the head beauty of the place—but who being unable to ride this day, it came into the hands of the Captain.

To make the mare more complete, although in winter time, its ears were decorated with white fly nets and dangling tassals, and from the saddle hung a large net of the same colour and texture, with a broad fringe, completely covering her hind quarters and reaching below her hocks.

Doleful eyed the whole with a grin of satisfied delight, and never did field marshal mount his charger for review, with a more self-complacent air than sat upon the brow of this distinguished character. Having steadied himself in his stirrups, and gathered up the reins, he cast an eye through the barley sugar and cake cans in the window upon Miss Jelly, and, hissing at the mare through his teeth with a jerk of the reins, went off in a canter. A rare actioned beast it was too! Up and down, up and down, it went so light and so easy, and yet making so little progress withal, that Ducrow himself might have envied the possession of it.

Thus he went tit-tup-ping along through the silent streets, to the infinite delight of all the Johns and Jennies, who were left to flatten their noses against the windows during their masters' and mistresses' absence, and here and there exciting the anger of a butcher's dog, or farmer's

cur, that flew at the mare's heels with an indignant bark as she passed.

Having timed himself to a nicety, our gallant M. C. arrived at the station just as the last fly and flight of donkeys drew up outside the iron-railing that runs along the railroad from the station-house, and, in the absence of Mr. Jorrocks, of course he was the object of attraction. "Good morning, Captain Doleful," exclaimed a dozen sweet voices from all sorts of vehicles, for women will toady a master of ceremonies, be he what he will; and thereupon the Captain gave one of his feature-wrinkling grins, and raised his oil-skin covered hat as high as the yard of penny ribbon would allow, while all the little boys and girls, for whom he had obtained half-holiday, burst into loud acclamations, as they stood or sat on Lily-white sand barrels, hazel bundles, and other miscellaneous articles, waiting for conveyance by the railway. "Now, children, mind, be orderly, and attend to what I told you," said the Captain, eying his juvenile friends as though he were marshalling them for a quadrille. "It now wants but ten minutes to the coming of the train, so be getting yourselves in order, unfurl the flags; and you, musicians," turning to the promenade band, who were hard at work with some XX, "be getting your instruments ready, to welcome Mr. Jorrocks with 'See the conquering hero

comes!' " As the minutes flew, the scene became more inspiriting. Eyes were strained up the rail-way in the direction he was to come, and ears were opened to catch the first sound of the engine. All was anxiety and expectation. Hope and fear vacillated on every countenance. "Should he not come, what a bore!" "Oh, but he's certain to arrive, and Mrs. Jorrocks too, arn't they Captain?" The Captain looked thoughtful and mysterious, as all great men should, but deigned no reply.

CHAPTER IX.

" ——— We poor unfledg'd
Have never wing'd from view o' the nest; we know not
What air's from home.—SHAKESPEARE.

PRECISELY at three-quarters of a minute before three, a loud wild shrill whistle, that seemed to issue from the bowels of the earth and run up into mid-air, was heard at the back of Shavington Hill, and, in an instant, the engine and long train rounded the base, the engine smoking and snorting like an exasperated crocodile. Nearer and nearer it comes, with a thundering sort of hum that sounds through the country. The wondering ploughman stops his team. The cows and sheep stand staring with astonishment, while the horses take a look, and then gallop about the fields, kicking up their heels and snorting with delight. The guard's red coat on the engine is visible—next his gold hat-band appears—now we read the Hercules on the engine, and anon it pulls up with a whiff, a puff, and a whistle, under the slate-covered shed, to give the Hercules his water, and set down and take up passengers and goods. Seven first-class passenger carriages follow the engine, all smart, clean, and yellow, with

appropriate names on each door panel—The Venus, The Mercury, The Comet, The Star, The Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, and the Prince of Wales; next come ten second class ones, green, with covered tops, and half covered sides, but in neither set is there anything at all like the Jorrocks party. Cattle-pens follow, holding sheep, swine, donkeys, and poultry; then came an open platform with a broken britscka, followed by a curious looking nondescript one horse vehicle, containing a fat man in a low-crowned hat, and one of those becoming articles of dress, a drab M'Intosh cloak, which gives him the appearance of sitting in a dirty shirt. Along with him sat two ladies, muffled up in cloaks, and at the back was a servant maid. From the bottom of the carriage swung a couple of large Westphalia hams, and a warming-pan.

"Pray is Mr. Jorrocks here?" inquired the elegant M. C., who had persuaded the clerk of the railway to let him in upon the line, riding his white charger to the door of the first class carriage, and raising his hat as he spoke, but getting no answer, he continued his interrogatory down the whole set until he came to the end, when casting a despairing glance at the cattle pens, he was about to wheel about, when the gentleman in the M'Intosh sack, in a very stentorian voice, roared out, "I say, SIR! Baint this the Datton station?"

"It is, Sir," replied Captain Doleful, in his most dignified manner.

"Then I want to land," responded the same sweet voice.

"Here's a gentleman wants to be down," observed Captain Doleful to the scarlet-coated guard, who came bustling past with a pen of geese to put upon the train.

"Yes, a gentleman and two ladies," roared the hero of the M'Intosh, "MISTER AND MISSIS JORROCKS in fact, and MISS JORROCKS!"

"Bless my heart," exclaimed Captain Doleful in ecstacies, "how delighted I am to see you! I really thought you were not coming," and thereupon the Captain raised his hat to the ladies, and offered his hand most cordially to Mr. Jorrocks.

"What, you knows me do you?" replied Mr. Jorrocks, with the sort of doubtful shake of the hand that a person gives when he thinks the next moment may discover a mistake. "You knows me do you?" repeated he, "you have the adwantage of me—pray who are *you*."

"Captain Doleful, M. C.," responded our worthy, presenting his card to the ladies; and thereupon Mr. Jorrocks, with a chuckle on his good-humoured countenance, as he glanced at the Captain's incongruous habiliments, seized his hand and rung it heartily, saying, "'Ow *are* ye, Doleful? 'Ow do ye do? Werry glad to see you—werry glad indeed; 'ow's the Nabob?"

"Middling, thank you," replied the Captain, with a faint blush on his cadaverous countenance. "But hadn't you better alight and get your carriage and things off the train?" inquired he, glad to turn the conversation, "they'll be off with you if you don't mind," and thereupon the Captain beckoned the guard, and Mr. Jorrocks, standing up in the vehicle, looking very like a hay-stack with a hat on the top, shook his M'Intosh, and bounded on to the ground. Mrs. Jorrocks, in a black velvet bonnet, lined with pink satin, and her body all shrouded in a sea-green silk cloak, then accepted the offer of the Captain's arm, and descended with caution and due state; while Belinda, with the spring of youth and elasticity in her limbs, bounded on to the foot-way beyond the rail. Benjamin, who was asleep at the end of the train in a covered caravan, along with the horses, being considerately kicked awake by Mr. Jorrocks, the process of unloading was commenced and speedily finished, and the vehicle, horses, Betsey, Benjamin, Mrs. Jorrocks, Jorrocks, Belinda, and Doleful, were all huddled together on the side of the railway, when a puff of the engine started off the train, and away it went, hissing and spitting through the quiet landscape, leaving our party to the undisturbed observation of the Handley Cross crew.

A second more sent the train out of sight, and

Captain Doleful, with his usual melancholy air, heightened at the moment by the feeling of witnessing a departure, leaving his charger in the care of Benjamin, offered Mrs. Jorrocks his arm, and walked her off to the station house, followed by Jorrocks and Belinda, amid the observations and inquiries of the numerous party ranged outside the barrier. The ladies being left to arrange their toilettes, Jorrocks and Doleful joined arms in a most friendly manner, and strutted back to the carriage, the round-about sack-like figure of the one, contrasting well with the lean, lathy, mountebank appearance of the other. Benjamin having his hands full with the three horses, had not had time to strip off his dirty white great coat, and display his fine new sky-blue postillion jacket, with the Jorrocks crest, a "fox's head," worked in white worsted on his right arm, or yet his new patent cords and top-boots, so Mr. Jorrocks, taking the horses from him, gave him an opportunity of putting himself right, while he stood by asking Doleful a hundred questions, and expatiating on the merits of the animals.

"This ere oss," says he, rubbing his hand up and down the Roman nose of a great rat-tailed brown, "I've ridden three seasons with the Surrey, he's never given me but one fall, and that was more my fault than his. Indeed I may say

it was mine entirely. 'Ow's this country off for foxes? Well, you see, I was chiveyin' this ere oss along like wildfire, for it was a most special fine scentin' day—breast-high all the way—and Noddin' Homer and Tom Hills, that's our 'untsman as was, were ridin' wiciously wenomously jealous of each other, for Tom's an honest fellow and hates a dirty 'umbug as much as myself, and by the way that reminds me to ask if you can recommend me to an honest man to buy my forage of? Well, we blazed down Windy Hill, and past Stowey Wood, just as though it were as level as this rally, when Homer, thinkin' to gain a nick, turned for Nosterly, and Tom and I rode slap for Guilsborough, where he threw a shoe, and I was left alone in my glory. I know'd the country well, and sinkin' the hill, stole down Muddiford Lane, with the pack goin' like beans on my left, with only two men within a mile of them, barrin' a miller with his sacks, who rode uncommon galvanizingly.

"Well, thinks I to myself, if they turn by Gatton Steep I'll have a nick, for though this 'oss was never *reglarly* pumped out, yet times are when he'd be better of a little more wind, and so as I rode along cranin' over the 'edge, 'oping every minute to see old Barbican, who was leadin' the pack that day, give a bend to my side, ven vot should occur but a gipsy camp half across

the lane, and three donkeys, two jacks and a jinney, huddled together in the other part so as to make a regular barrier, and, by the bye, did you ever read Cornish's History of the French Revolution? but, however, never mind that at present; well, we were close upon the camp and donkeys before ever we saw them, for it was just at that sharp turn of the road where the waterin' trough is—confound them, they always place pikes and troughs in the hawkwardest places—and this 'oss though with all his eyes about him, was so heager lookin' for the 'ounds, that I'm dashed if he didn't come upon them so suddenly that he hadn't time to change his leg or do no thing, consequentially he dodged first among the gipsey bairns, puttin' his foot through a *sarce*pan the old father gipsey was mendin', and then, fearin' mischief, he flew to the left, and cast me right on to the old jinney ass's back, who, risin' at the moment, finished the business by kickin' me off into the dirtiest heap of composition for turnips I ever smelt in my life—haw, haw, haw! I really think I wind it now. Still the 'oss is a good un—an undeniable good un. When he carries me well, I ax's three 'undred for him, at other times I'd take thirty.

"This too's a *grand* nag!" said he, taking hold of the ear of a stiff bay with white hind legs, and a bang tail—"good at every thing—rides, drives,

'unts, and carries a *'ooman*, I calls him Xerxes, cause as how ven I drives two, as I'm a doin' to-day, he goes leader, and in-course the brown, which I calls *Arter*-Xerxes, comes arter him! Both go like the vind.—Binjimin, mind the traces, —and now be after puttin' too, your Missis will be ready by the time we get all square;" and thereupon Mr. Jorrocks began fussing and busying himself with the horses and harness, and very soon had Xerxes and Arter-Xerxes in their proper places, "tandem fashion." The carriage was an old, low, open, double-bodied one, with red and black wheels, looking as much like a fire engine as any thing else, especially with the Westphalia hams and warming pan swinging from the bottom like buckets. It held four comfortably, or five on a pinch, and the inmates were Mr. Jorrocks and his wife, Belinda, and Betsey. It was tremendously stuffed and hung about with luggage, and at the back was attached a most sporting package, consisting of two saddles done up in horse-sheeting; and through the roller which fastened them to the carriage, two stout hunting whips and a new brass horn were thrust. All things being ready, Mr. Jorrocks gave Benjamin a "leg up" on to Xerxes, and gathering up the reins of his wheeler in a most workmanlike manner stepped into the vehicle, and preceded by Captain Doleful on the white charger, drove

up to the station-house door, to the infinite delight of all the spectators outside the rails, amid the puffings, scrapings, and tootlings of the musicians, the pointing of children, the unfurling of flags, and general movement of the meeting.

Mrs. Jorrocks and Belinda had improved the few minutes in the station-house, and with the aid of Betsey and a looking-glass had put to rights any little disorder the joltings and blowings of the journey had occasioned. Having cast her sea-green wrapper, Mrs. Jorrocks shone forth in a superb scarlet brocade pelisse, so bright and dazzling that even in Great Coram Street, or St. Pancras Church, it acted as a load-stone on the eyes of the beholders, and now in the quiet country was almost overpowering. She looked like a full-blown peony.

Belinda, the young, the fair, the beautiful Belinda, was the picture of innocence and health. Her large lustrous blue eyes, with their long silken lashes, shone "sweetly lambent" from beneath a drab silk drawn bonnet lined with blue, across which a rich black veil was thrown; a smile hovered round her ruby lips, disclosing the beautiful regularity of her pearly teeth; while the late rapid movement through the air, joined with the warmth of the station-house, and the excitement of the scene, had imparted a slight flush to a delicate, but beautifully clear complexion. Her

shining brown hair, drawn across her forehead in the Madonna style, was confined with a narrow band of blue velvet, while a rich well-fitting drab silk pelisse displayed the symmetry of her exquisitely rounded figure. Her beautifully formed feet were enclosed in well-fitting patent leather shoes, whose ties winding up a not over thin ankle, were lost in the vandyke flounces of her trousers.

The station-house and buildings completely concealed our party from the spectators outside, consequently Mr. Jorrocks had time to make all those comfortable dispositions of the persons of his suite as are always desirable in public processions, but are sometimes driven out of the heads even of the most experienced paraders, by the inquisitive observations of many hundred eyes. Captain Doleful having been duly presented, and all being ready, Mr. Jorrocks took Belinda upon the draw-out seat next himself, then followed Mrs. Jorrocks upon the other regular seat, while Betsey bundled in behind, among Dundee marmalade pots, tea caddies, lump-sugar, Copenhagen cherry brandy, seed cakes, currants and things of all sorts Having given a knowing cast over his left shoulder to see that all was right, Mr. Jorrocks cried out, "Now, Binjimin, follow the Captain," and giving Arter-Xerxes a touch with the point of the whip, passed from the

screen formed by the station-house, to the folding iron gates at the side, which being thrown open at the approach of the Captain, they made a splendid turn off the railway line among the crowded space outside. "Huzza! huzza! huzza! huzza! huzza! huzza!" exclaimed a hundred voices; "Huzza! huzza!" responded a hundred more, amid the roll of drums, the puffing of the horns, the flapping of the flags, and the waving of handkerchiefs from those whose aristocratic ideas precluded the expression of clamorous applause. Doleful stopped Benjamin on the leader, and Mr. Jorrocks pulling short up, stood erect in the vehicle, and taking off his low-crowned hat bowed and waved it repeatedly to the company, while Mrs. Jorrocks acknowledged the compliment by frequent kisses of her hand, and Belinda's face became suffused with blushes at the publicity and novelty of her situation.—Having sufficiently exercised their lungs, hats began to rest upon their owner's heads, handkerchiefs were returned to their reticules, and amid a general buzz and exclamation of applause, a rush was made at the carriage to get a closer view of Belinda.

"By Jove, what a beautiful girl!" exclaimed Captain Percival (a new comer) to his friend Mr. Drummond, eyeing Belinda through his glass.

"Did you ever *see* such eyes?" inquired a second.

"Handsomest creature I ever beheld!" observed a third.

"What a quiz the old girl is," remarked another.

"Is she her daughter?" inquired a third of Captain Doleful, who was busy marshalling the procession.

"Lots of money I suppose!" said another.

"He looks like a rich fellow, with that great sack of a M'Intosh."

"The servant girl's not bad looking."

"*Miss* for my money," said another, "I'm in love with her already."

"I wish she'd stand up and let's see her size."

"I lay a guinea she's a clipper."

"There's a hand! I'll be bound for it she has a good foot and ancle. None of your hairy-heel'd ones."

"He looks like a jolly old dog," observed another. "We shall have lots of dinners, I dare say."

Doleful's face wrinkled into half its usual size with delight, for he plainly saw he had made a hit; and most fortunate were those men who had cultivated his friendship through the medium of the subscription books at the libraries, for the two guinea subscribers were immediately presented to the trio, while the guinea men were let in at intervals as the procession moved along the

road. Nor should we omit to mention, for the instruction of all other M. C.'s, that thirteen new names were put down that evening, so that Doleful's prospects were brighter than ever.

The first burst of applause having subsided, the party got settled into the order of the day, as laid down in the programme of the worthy M. C. First went the proprietory school children, eighty boys and a hundred and nine girls, three a-breast, with sundry pocket handkerchief banners. Next came the "Fox and Floreat Scientia" flag, on double poles so as to stretch across the road; the musicians, two drummers, two horn blowers, two fiddlers, and a fifer, were planted behind it; after which came three glazed calico flags, of various colours in stripes, followed by Whackem's mathematical seminary, and the rabble at large. Then came another large double flag, in broad stripes of scarlet and white, with the words "JORROCKS FOR EVER!" done in black letters; Doleful's own place was immediately after this, but of course during the progress to Handley Cross, he kept along-side the carriage of the distinguished strangers. The flys, gigs, ponies, donkeys, chaises, &c. followed on in a long drawn line, just as they could jostle in, for the Captain knew the high hedges on each side of the narrow road would do more towards keeping them in order than all the injunctions and remonstrances he could lay down or use.

Mrs. Jorrocks was delighted!—Never before did she think anything either of hunting or her husband, but now the former seemed a most delightful amusement, and Jorrocks appeared a perfect hero. He too was charmed with his reception, and grinned and nudged Belinda with his elbow, and cast a sly wink over his shoulder at Betsey, as they jumbled along the road, and the compliments of the crowd came showering among them. Then he turned his eyes up to heaven as if lost in reflection and bewilderment at the honour he had arrived at. Anon he caught the point of his whip and dropped it scientifically along Arterxerxes' side, then he began to whistle, when Captain Doleful having resigned the side of the carriage on which Mrs. Jorrocks was sitting to Captain Percival, came round to say a few nothings to our worthy friend.

"Well, Miserrimus," said Jorrocks, opening the conversation as though he had known him all his life, "you see I'm down upon you as the extinguisher said to the rushlight—always say you carn't be too quick in catchin' a flea.—'Ow's the Nabob?"

"Middling, thank you," again replied the Captain,—"*you're* looking uncommonly well I'm sure," said he eyeing Mr. Jorrocks as he spoke.

"Oh *me!*" replied Jorrocks, "bless you I'm never bad—never except I gets a drop too much,

as will happen at times in the best regulated families, you know, Miserrimus." Whereupon Mr. Jorrocks, with a knowing grin, gave Doleful a dig in the ribs with the but-end of his whip—saying, "have you got any of that 'cold roast' you told me of in your letter?"

"Why no, Mr. Jorrocks, it's all gone, but there's plenty more in Handley Cross. It's the best place for beef I know.—Indeed for everything."

"You'll be desperation fond of 'unting I s'pose," observed Mr. Jorrocks, after a slight pause, flourishing his whip over his head, and giving a knowing look at Doleful's accoutrements.

"It's the only thing worth living for in my mind," replied Captain Doleful.

"By jingo! so say I," rejoined Mr. Jorrocks; "all time's lost that's not spent in 'unting.—Give us your hand, Miserrimus, my *boy*, for you must be a trump—a man after my own 'eart!" and thereupon Jorrocks gave him such a shaking as nearly sent him off his horse.

"That'll be your kiver (cover) 'ack (hack) I presume," observed Mr. Jorrocks after their hands were released, as he cast his eye at the white. "He goes up and down like a yard and a half of pump water."

Doleful did not know whether this was meant as a compliment or otherwise, so he "grinned

horridly a ghastly smile," and asked Mr. Jorrocks if he was fond of music. "Music!" said Mr. Jorrocks, *yes*, the music of the 'ounds—none o' your tambourecnin' work. Give me the real *ough*, *ough*, *ough*, of a fine deep-toned 'ound in the depths of a rocky dell, as he drags up to old Reynard among the brush-wood," and as he spoke, Mr. Jorrocks snuffed the air and threw his head about as though he were feeling for a scent himself.—"What sort of fencin' have you?"

"Fencing!" repeated Captain Doleful thoughtfully—"fencing, why we've had none, I think, since the theatre closed."

"*Humph!*" said Mr. Jorrocks, that's queer—never knew a play-actor in my life with the slightest turn for 'unting."

The foremost in the procession having reached the outskits of the town, a halt was made to allow the pedestrians to knock the dust off their shoes, and get their voices ready for shouting. Doleful rode along the line exhorting them to order and regularity, and directing the streets through which the procession should pass, taking particular care to keep wide of the Barnington's. A considerable accession was here made to their strength by numerous groups of ladies and gentlemen, who, attracted by the fineness of the day, and a little natural curiosity, had wandered

out to see what sort of an animal a Cockney master of hounds was. Miss Prim and Miss Prosey's seminaries too turned out in their pink and blue ginghams, and came up just at the period of the halt,—all the grooms and helpers of the town who could not get to the station now flocked to swell the throng. The hubbub and confusion was excessive, and they pushed, and elbowed, and fought to get near the carriage to have a close view of Mr. Jorrocks. "My eyes but he's a fat un!" exclaimed Mr. Giblets the butcher to his foreman, "it would be a credit to a butcher to supply such a gemman as him;" whereupon he thrust a card into Mr. Jorrocks's hand, containing his name, trade, and place of abode. This was a signal for the rest, and immediately a shoal of cards were tendered from persons of all callings and professions. Lucy Sandey would mangle, wash, and clear-starch; then Hannah Pye kept the best potatoes and green-groceries in general; Tom Hardy supplied milk at all hours; George Dodd let Donkeys by the day or hour; Samuel Mason offered the card of the Bramber livery stables, where there was a lock-up coach-house; Susan Muddle hoped the ladies would drink with her at the Spa at a shilling a week, and glass found. Then there was a wine-merchant's card, followed by lodging-house keepers' without end, and a chimney-sweep's.

All in advance being now ready, Captain Doleful came grinning and capering through the crowd, and announced to the ladies that they were about to enter the town, and informed Mr. Jorrocks that they would first of all proceed to the Dragon Hotel, from the balcony of which it would have a good effect if he would address the meeting. Without waiting for Mr. Jorrocks's assurance that he "didn't know what to say," he placed himself in advance of Benjamin, and raised his hunting whip as a signal to the musicians, who immediately struck up "See the conquering hero comes," and the cavalcade proceeded. The boom of the drums, the twang of the horns, and the shouts of the children, brought every human being to the doors, windows, and verandahs, and there was such running, and rushing, and fighting to see the conquering hero, and such laughing among the servant maids at the ample dimensions of his shoulders, with as many observations upon his retinue, as would fill a chapter of themselves.

After passing the long line of villas that stud the road in the Mount Sion direction, the cavalcade turned into Arthur Street, where the noise and bustle increased ten-fold. Shop-lads, no longer to be restrained, rushed out in defiance of their masters' holloas, some hastily putting up the shutters, others leaving the shops to take

care of themselves. Bazaars, fancy shops, jewellers, &c. were drawn of both buyers and sellers; and as the "Floreat Scientia" banner rounded the turn into High Street, an advancing mob from the other end of the town charged with such vigour as sent both poles through Stevenson's, the hatter's, window, damaging a dozen pasteboard boxes, being the principal part of his stock in trade. Nothing was heard above the clamour but the boom of the drums, and the occasional twang of a horn, while Captain Doleful's red coat, and his horse's white head, seemed borne upon the shoulders of the multitude. Thus they proceeded in stately array down High Street, and neared the Dragon Hotel.

At length they got the carriage up to the arched door, and the party alighted amid a tremendous burst of applause. Captain Doleful having tendered his arm to Mrs. Jorrocks, Belinda took her uncle's, and no sooner did Betsey get out of the back seat of the carriage than a whole host of little dirty boys scrambled in to obtain a better view, making desperate havoc among the Dundee marmalade, and Copenhagen cherry brandy, to the infinite indignation of Benjamin, who roared lustily from the leader that he would "oss-vip 'em" all round.

Being ushered into the balconied apartment of the first floor front, Captain Doleful took a hasty

review of his person at the looking-glass, placing the few straggling hairs in the most conspicuous manner over his forehead, and loosening his oil-skin-covered hat from his scarlet coat, advanced with out-squared toes and elbows to present himself to the notice of the meeting.

His appearance in the balcony was the signal for a universal roar, amid which, the drums and wind instruments did their duty. After bowing and grimacing most condescendingly to the meeting below, silence was at length obtained, and he proceeded to address them as follows :—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—*ladies* and gentlemen," he repeated, laying the emphasis on the word *ladies*, and grinning like an elderly ape on all around, "encouraged by your smiles, by your applause, for, without you, as Mr. Campbell the poet beautifully inquires, 'What is man?—a world without a sun,' I present myself to your notice to perform an act that I verily and conscientiously believe will prove most conducive to the interest, the happiness, and general welfare of this thriving and important town." Here the Captain placed his fore finger on his lip, and, according to previous arrangement with the drummers, they rumbled with their drums, and the children gave some loud huzzas, in conjunction with such of the mob as were troubled with a turn for shouting. "Ladies and gentlemen," he resumed, "I stand

not here for the gratification of the paltry personal vanity of addressing this distinguished assembly, but I present myself to your notice, in discharge of the high, the onerous, the honourable and all-important office of Master of the Ceremonies of this renowned Spa, to introduce to your notice one of the most distingnished, the most determined, the most popular, and the most scientific sportsmen England, or any other country, ever saw (loud cheers). Need I say, gentlemen, that this illustrious individual is the great and renowned Mr. Jorrocks—a name familiar to our ears as household words—so familiar that it is even chalked on the walls of our town; and it is indeed a high—a flattering circumstance to my mind, that I—even I—the humble individual who now stands before you, should have been the means of procuring for a town that I love so ardently, a man of such unequalled excellence and such distinguished worth."

Here Doleful being rather blown, put his finger upon his lip again, upon which the drums rumbled, the horns twanged, and a round of applause was brewed up. He resumed,—"Gentlemen, the temporary cloud that obscured the brightness of our delightful town has passed away! another and a brighter sun has risen, beneath whose fostering rays, prosperity, bright, unequalled prosperity, shall renovate our homes, and draw forth

blessings from your grateful hearts (cheers). This, gentlemen, is a thought that repays me for a world of trouble, and believe me that in all the changes and chances of this eventful life, amid all the frowns of life's vicissitudes, the bright recollection of this hour will furnish consolation that a thousand woes will not outweigh (great applause). Let me not, however, ladies and gentlemen, dwell too long on the part I have happily, but unworthily played in this transaction. Let me not stand between that bright constellation of sporting knowledge and the indulgence of your curiosity. Rather let me withdraw, with a bosom o'erflowing with heart-felt gratitude for the honours your kindness has heaped upon me, and introduce to your notice our great and illustrious stranger." Here Doleful squared out his elbows and bowed most humbly and condescendingly, first to the front, then to the east and west, and, courtier-like, backed from the balcony into the room, amid loud and long-continued cheers.

While he was delivering himself of all this eloquence, Mrs. Jorrocks was busy inside the room preparing her husband for presentation to the meeting. Having made him take off his M'Intosh, she brushed his blue coat over, rubbed the velvet collar right, put his wig straight, and wiped the dust off his Hessian boots with a corner of the table-cover. Doleful came backing in, and

nearly upset Jorrocks as he was standing on one leg by the table, undergoing the latter operation. "Now it's your turn, Mr. Jorrocks," observed the Captain, on the former recovering his equilibrium, and thereupon they joined hands and advanced into the balcony, like the Siamese twins, amid the uproarious applause of the meeting.

"'Ow are ye all?" said Mr. Jorrocks with the greatest familiarity, nodding round to the meeting, and kissing his hand. "'Ope's you are well. Now my frind, Miserrimus, having spun you a yarn about who I am, and all that sort of thing, I'll not run his foil, but get upon fresh ground, and say a few words about how matters are to be managed.

"You see I've come down to be master of your 'ounds, and first of all I'll explain to you what *I* means by the word master. Some people call a man a master of 'ounds wot sticks an 'orn in his saddle, and blows when he likes, but leaves every thing else to the 'untsman. That's not the sort of master of 'ounds I mean to be. Others call a man a master of 'ounds wot puts in the paper Mr. So-and-so's 'ounds meet on Monday, at the Loin o' Lamb; on Wednesday, at the Brisket o' Weal; and on Saturday, at the Frying-pan; and after that, jest goes out or not, as suits his convenience —but *that's* not the sort of master of 'ounds I means to be. Again, some call themselves mas-

ters of 'ounds, when they pay the difference atwixt the subscription and the cost, leaving the management of matters, the receipt of money, payment of damage, and all them sort of partiklars, to the secretary. But that's not the sort of master of 'ounds I means to be. Still, I means to ride with an 'orn in my saddle. Yonder it is, see," said he, pointing to the package behind the carriage, "a reg'lar Percival, silver mouth-piece, deep cup'd—and I means to adwertise the 'ounds in the paper, and not go sneakin' about like some of them beggarly Cockney 'unts, that look more as if they were goin' to rob a hen roost than 'unt a fox, but havin' fixed the meets, I shall attend them most punctual and regler, and take off my 'at (hat) to all *payin'* subscribers as they come up (cheers). This, I thinks, will be the best way of doin' business, for there are some men wot don't care a copper for owin' the master money, so long as the matter rests atwixt themselves, and yet who would not like to see me sittin' among my 'ounds with my 'at slouched over my eyes, takin' no more notice of them than if they were as many pigs, as much as to say to all the gemmen round, 'these are the nasty, dirty, seedy screws wot don't pay their subscription.'

"In short, I means to be an M. F. H. in reality, and not in name. When I sees young chaps careerin' o'er the country without lookin' at the

'ounds, and in all humane probability not knowin' or carin' a copper where they are, and I cries, '*'old 'ard!*' I shall expect to see them pull up, and not wait till the next fence *fatches* them too."

Here Mr. Jorrocks made a considerable pause, whereupon the cheering and drumming was renewed, and as it died away, he went on as follows:—

"Of all sitivations under the sun, none is more enviable or more 'onerable than that of a master of fox-'ounds! Talk of a M. P.! vots an M. P. compared to an M. F. H.? Your M. P. lives in a tainted h'atmosphere among other M. P.'s and loses his consequence by the commonness of the office, and the scoldings he gets from his constituents, but an M. F. H. holds his levee in the stable, his levee in the kennel, and his levee in the 'unting field—is great and important every where—has no one to compete with him, no one to find fault, but all join in doing honour to him to whom honour is so greatly due (cheers). And oh, John Jorrocks! my good frind," continued the worthy grocer, fumbling the silver in his small clothes with upturned eyes to heaven, "to think that you, after all the ups and downs of life—the crossins and jostlins of merchandise and ungovernable trade—the sortin of sugars—the mexing of teas—the postins of ledgers, and handlin of inwoices, should have arrived at this

distinguished post, is most miraculously wonderful, most singularly queer. Gentlemen, *this* is the proudest moment of my life! (cheers.) I've now reached the top-rail in the ladder of my h'ambition! (renewed cheers). Binjimin!" he hollowed out to the boy below, "Binjimin! I say, give an eye to them' ere h'articles behind the chay—the children are all among the Copenhagen brandy and marmeylad! Vy don't you vollop them? Vere's the use of furnishing you with a vip, I vonder?"

"To resume," said he, after he had seen the back of the carriage cleared of the children, and the marmalade and things put strait. "'Unting, as I have often said, is the sport of kings—the image of war wihtout its guilt, and only five-and-twenty per cent. of its danger. To me the clink of the couples from a vipper-in's saddle is more musical than any notes that ever came out of Greasey's mouth. I dosen't wish to say nothin' in disparagement of no man, but no Nabob that ever was foaled, loves 'unting better than me. It's the werry breath of my body! The liver and bacon of my existence! I dosen't know what the crazeyologists may say, but I believes my head is nothin' but one great bump of 'unting (cheers). 'Unting fills my thoughts by day, and many a good run I have in my sleep. I'm none of your fine, dandified, Rotten-row swells, that only ride

out to ride 'ome again, but I loves the smell of the mornin' h'air, and the werry mud on my tops when I comes home of an evenin' is dear to my 'eart, (cheers). Oh, my frinds! if I could but go to the kennel now, get out the 'ounds, find my fox, have a good chivey, and *kill* him, for no day is good to me without blood. I'd—I'd—I'd—drink three pints of port after dinner instead of two! (loud cheers.) That's the way to show Diana your gratitude for favours past, and secure a continuance of her custom in future (cheers). But *that* we will soon do, for if you've

> " ' 'Osses sound, and dogs 'ealthy,
> Earths well-stopped, and foxes plenty,'

no longer shall a master be wantin' to lead you to glory (loud cheers). I'll not only show you how to do the trick in the field, but a scientific course o' lectors shall train the young idea in the art at 'ome. I've no doubt we shall all get on capitally—fox 'unters are famous fellers—tell me a man's a fox-hunter, and I loves him at once. We'll soon get acquainted, and then you'll say that John Jorrocks is the man for your money. At present I've done—hoping werry soon to meet you all in the field—for the present I says adieu."

Hereupon Mr. Jorrocks bowed, and kissing his hand, backed out of the balcony, leaving his auditory to talk him over at their leisure.

CHAPTER X.

"A slippery and subtle knave."—SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Mr. Jorrocks backed from the balcony into the "Moon," after delivering the luminous address reported in our last chapter, Captain Doleful looked at his watch, and found it wanted but ten minutes to the time he was to appear at the board of her imperial majesty, Mrs. Barnington, so ringing for Mr. Snubbins, the landlord of the Dragon, he hastily consigned the party to his protection, and, quitting the room, ran through the town like a lamplighter, to re-arrange his toilette at his lodgings. Off went the old militia coat, the white moleskins and Hessians made way, with pantomimic quickness, for a black coat and trousers, which, with the shrivelled buff waistcoat, and a pair of broad-stringed pumps, completed the revised edition of the *arbiter elegantiarum* of Handley Cross Spa. The crowded incidents of the hour left no time for reflection, and fortunate, perhaps it was, for

the Captain, that he had no time to consider of what had taken place, or even his creative genius might have discovered some little difficulty in reconciling the discrepancies that existed between his professions and performances. So quick, however, were his movements, and the transition of events, that John Trot, the under butler, who was one of the audience before the Dragon, had not time to detail the doings of the day to Mr. Mountain, the butler, to tell to Mrs. Stumps, the housekeeper, for the information of Jeanette, to carry in broken English to her mistress, ere Captain Doleful's half resolute knock announced his arrival at the door.

"Why here's old wo-begone himself, I do believe!" exclaimed John, just as he had got so far in his narrative as the intrusion of the flag-poles into Mr. Stevenson's the hatter's window. "It is, indeed," added he, casting his eye through the grating of the area at the Captain, as he stood above; I declare he has pealed off his uniform, and come like a Christian. Dirty brute, it arn't possible he can have washed himself, for I saw him bolt out of the Dragon not three minutes afore I left, and I only looked in at the Phœnix and Flower-pot, and took one glass of hot elder wine, and came straight home;" saying which, John, in the absence of Sam, the footman, settled himself leisurely into his

coatee, and proceeded to let the Captain into the house.

"The dog's come to dine," said John, on his return, "and precious hungry he is, I dare say, for he don't allow himself above two feeds a week they say. However, I gave him a bit of consolation, by telling him that missis had laid down at four o'clock, with orders not to be disturbed, and therefore it might be eight or nine o'clock before they dined; but 'Sir,' says I, 'there's the Morning Post,' so I left him to *eat* that, and precious savage he looked. Now, I declare on the honour of a gentleman, of all the shabby screws I ever came thwart of in the whole of my professional career, that Doleful is the dirtiest and meanest. T'other night it was raining perfect wash-hand-stand basins full, and after sitting master out to bed, and missis until she began to yawn, he mustered courage to do the expensive, and asked me to fetch him a fly. Well, never had I seen the colour of his coin, often and often as he has darkened our door, and come with his nasty jointed clogs, dirty cloaks, and wet numbrellas; but thinks I to myself, this surely will be catching time, and it 'ill all come in a heap in the shape of a golden sovereign pound cake; so out I splashed, pink silks and all, the first day on, too, and brought up Sam Fletcher's yellow with the grey; skipped up stairs, told him all

was ready, handed him his hat, upon which I saw him fumbling in his upper pocket; he stepped into the fly, and just as I closed the door, slipped something into my hand—felt small—half sov., better than nothing, thought I—'thank you, sir, Miss Jelly's,' cried I to Master Sam, off he went, in comes I, looks in my hand—hang me, if it wern't a *Joey!*"

"That beats every thing!" exclaimed Mr. Mountain, the butler, laying down a handful of spoons he had been counting over, "why do you know he gave *me* one the very same day, and it lies on the entrance table now, to let him see how little we care for Joeys in our house."

"Who's that you're talking about?" inquired Mrs. Stumps, whose room being on the other side of the passage from the butler's pantry, enabled her to hold a dialogue without the trouble of moving herself across, she having been selected on account of her fatness and the volubility of her tongue.

"Only old lamentable," replied Mr. Trot, "what do you think the fellow's done now?—complimented Mr. Mountain and myself with a Joey a-piece. Stop till I catch him with a decent coat on, and see if I don't dribble the soup or melted butter over it."

"Confound the mean dog," observed Mrs. Stumps, "he's the most miserable man that ever

was seen. I do wonder that missis, with all her fine would-be-fashionable airs, countenances such a cur. Master may be dull, and I dare say he is, but he's a prince compared to old Doleful."

"Master's *soft*," replied Mr. Mountain thoughtfully, "and he's *hard* too in some things, but there are many worse men than he. Besides, the wife's enough to drive him mad. *She's a terrible tartar.*"

"She's in one of her tantrums's to day." observed Mrs. Stumps, "and has had Mademoiselle crying all the morning. "She's tried on thirteen dresses already and none will please her. It will be eight o'clock very likely before they dine, and that reminds me she had two notes this morning by post—one was from Lady Gillon, and Sam thought he saw something about dining, and staying all night, as he took it up stairs, so just you keep your ears open at dinner, and find out the day, as I want to have a few friends to cards and a quadrille the first time the family go from home."

"Oh, I dare say I can acquaint you all about it without waiting for dinner," observed Mr. Mountain. "Sam, just step into the clothes room, and feel in B's brown frock-coat that he had on this morning, and bring me his letters." Sam obeyed, and speedily returned with three. Mr. Mountain took them, and casting a wafered

one aside, as either a "bill or a begging letter," opened a fine glazed note with blue edges, sealed with a transfixed heart on green wax:—"Monday, at ten, at the Apollo Belvidere," was all it contained, and winking at Sam, who winked at John Trot, who passed the wink to Mrs. Stumps, Mr. Mountain refolded the note, and opened the one from Sir Gibeon Gillon, which contained a pressing invitation for the Friday following, and to make one at a *battu* on the Saturday.

"You must find out whether they go or not," observed Mrs. Stumps; "they will be sure to say something about it at dinner, so mind be on the look out. There's missis's bell! my eyes, how she rings! would't be near her for the world."—A perfect peal!

After Doleful had had a good spell at the Post, beginning with the heading and ending with the printer's name at the end, Mr. Barnington made his appearance from his room below, where he had been deceiving himself into the belief that he was reading, and saluted the M. C. in the way that a man generally takes his wife's friends when he does not like her. After exchanging a few nothings, he looked with an air of easy indifference round the room, then at the French clock on the mantle-piece, next at his watch to see that it was not wrong, and finally composed himself cross-legged into a low douro with massive

cushions at the back and sides. Doleful resumed his seat on the sofa. Thus they sat for half an hour, listening to the tickings of the time-piece, looking alternately at each other and the door. Seven o'clock came and no Mrs. Barnington, then the quarter chimed in that concise sort of way, that almost says, "Oh, it's only the quarter!" the half hour followed with a fuller chorus and more substantial music, whereupon Barnington, who was beginning to be hungry, looked indignantly at his watch and the door, then at Doleful, but wisely said nothing. Doleful, who had only treated himself to a penny bun since breakfast, was well-nigh famished, and inwardly wished he had palmed himself off on the Jorrocks'; when just as the time-piece was chiming away at a quarter to eight, a page in a green and gold uniform threw open the door, and in sailed the majestic Mrs. Barnington in lavender-coloured satin. With a slight inclination of her head to the Captain, who was up like an arrow to receive her, and a look of contempt at her husband, she seated herself on an ottoman, and glancing at a diminutive watch in her armlet, and seeing it correspond with the time on the mantel-piece, without a word of apology for keeping them waiting, she hurried off the page to order dinner to be served *instantly*.

In ten minutes, just as Mrs. Barnington was desiring Doleful to ring to see why dinner was not ready, Mr. Mountain, with great state, and an air of the most profound respect, walked into the centre of the room, and announced that it was on the table, when, backing out, and leaving the page in charge of the door, he returned to the parlour to twist a napkin round his thumb, and place himself before the centre of the side-board to be ready to raise the silver cover from the soup tureen, and hand it to John Trot, to pass to Sam, to place on the tray, the instant the party were seated. Mrs. Barnington, with an air of languid absence, mechanically placed her hand on Doleful's arm, and sailed down the thickly-carpeted stair-case, past the footmen in the entrance, and dropt into a many-cushioned chair at the head of the table. Doleful seated himself at the side opposite the fire, and Barnington of course took his place at the foot of the table. Soup and a glass of sherry passed round amid the stares and anxious watchings of the servants, before any thing like a conversation was commenced, for Barnington was not a man of many words at any time, and fear of his wife and dislike of Doleful, now sealed his lips entirely. Several indifferent topics were tried during the fish, alternately by Mrs. Barnington and Doleful.

—The weather—the Morning Post—the last elopement—somebody's band—the new French milliner, when, gathering up her napkin, and giving her head a toss in the air, she observed, in a careless easy sort of way, "By the bye, Captain Doleful, I forgot to ask you if those Horrocks people arrived to-day?"

"Oh yes, marm, they came," replied the Captain, with uneasiness on his brow, for he saw "Mountain and Co." were all eyes and ears to catch what he said.—"A little malt liquor, if you please. Do you get your malt of Dobbs?" inquired he of Barnington, making a desperate effort to turn the conversation at the outset, the only chance of effecting it; "if you don't," observed he, "there's a capital fellow come from Mortlake in Surrey, to establish an agency here for the sale of the same sort of beer the Queen drinks, and apropos of that, Mrs. Barnington, perhaps you are not aware that her Majesty is so truly patriotic as to indulge in the juice of the hop—takes it at luncheon, I understand, in a small silver cup, a present from the Prince, with the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown, beautifully raised in dead gold upon it, made by Storr and Mortimer, who certainly have more real taste and ingenuity in trinkets, and articles of *virtu* than all the rest of London put together, —but this beer is very good—clear—amber and

hoppy," added he, drinking it off, and hoping to drown old Jorrocks, wife, niece, and all, in the draught.

"Who is Horrocks, that you were asking about, my dear?" inquired Barnington of his wife, for the purpose of letting Doleful see he didn't consider him worth answering, and not from any motives of curiosity,—an infirmity from which he was perfectly free.

"Only some people the Captain and I were talking about this morning, my love, that were expected from London. They are *not* come, you say?" added she, turning to the Captain.

"Oh yes, marm, I said they *were* come. Allow me the honour of taking wine with you? Do you take Champagne? Champagne to your mistress," looking at Mr. Mountain. Mountain helped them accordingly, giving the Captain as little as possible.

"Well, and what sort of people are they?" resumed Mrs. Barnington, setting down her glass, and looking at Doleful as much as to say, "come, no nonsense."

"Upon my word I can hardly give an opinion, for I saw so little of them; but I should say from what little I did see, that they are very respectable—that's to say (haw hem), people well to do in the world (hem). He seems an uncommonly good-natured old fellow—rattles and talks at a

tremendous rate; but really I can hardly fairly give an opinion upon their other qualifications from the very little I saw."

"How many carriages had they?" inquired Mrs. Barnington.

"One, with a pair, but they came by the train, they will probably have more coming by the road."

"Many servants?"

"Not many, I think. Perhaps they are coming by the road too."

"What are the women like?"

"The old lady seems a monstrous good-natured, round-about, motherly sort of body, neither very genteel nor yet altogether vulgar—a fair average woman in fact—charitable—flannel petticoat—soup kitchen sort of woman.—This is capital mutton—never tasted better. By the way, Mr. Barnington, did you ever eat any Dartmoor mutton? it certainly is the best and sweetest in the world, and this is as like it as anything can possibly be."

"No," was the answer Mr. Barnington vouchsafed our hero, who, bent on turning the conversation, and nothing disconcerted, immediately addressed himself to his hostess, with, "Beautiful part of the country—fine scenery—should like to live there—people so unaffected and hospitable—ask you to dine and sleep—no puddling your way home through dirty lanes in a dark night.

The view from Æther rocks on the edge of Dunmore, most magnificent—there's a fine one also on the road between Exeter and Tiverton—and near Honiton too—what food that country would afford your splendid pencil, Mrs. Barnington. I know no one so competent to do justice to the scenery as yourself," and thereupon the Captain used one of his most insinuating grins. Mrs. Barnington went on eating her "*vole au vent*," inwardly resolving to know all about the Jorrocks's, without compromising one jot of her dignity.

The conversation then took a brisk and rapid range over many topics and to divers places—Bath, Cheltenham, Brighton, Tunbridge Wells, were all visited in succession, and at last Mrs. Barnington fairly landed the Captain back at Handley Cross. "I suppose we shall be having a ball here soon, sharn't we, Captain?" inquired she. "That depends upon Mrs. Barnington," replied the obsequious M. C. in the humblest tone. "If *you* are so disposed there's no doubt of our having one. *My* ball at present stands first on the list, and that will take place to-morrow fortnight."

"Oh, I forgot your ball entirely—true—oh dear, no! I shouldn't wish for one before that—it might interfere with your's. Of course you will send me five tickets."

"The Captain bowed profoundly, for this as

much as said there would be a five pound note coming. "I hope you will have a good one," added she. "There will most probably be some new comers by that time to amuse one with their strange faces and queer ways.—I wonder if the Horrocks's will go?"

The idea at that moment flashed across the Captain's mind too, and a prophetic thought assuring him they would, he determined to grapple with the subject instead of fighting shy, and ventured boldly to predict they would, and once more essayed to smooth their passage to Mrs. Barnington's patronage.

"Oh, I have no earthly objection to them, I assure you, I *can* have none to people I never either saw or heard of. Of course, if they have letters of introduction I shall call upon them—if not, and you assure me, or rather *convince* me, of their respectability, I shall notice them the same as I do other people who come here as strangers."

"Very much obliged indeed," replied the Captain, feeling all the time that he was "thanking her for nothing."—"They are, I believe, highly respectable. She, I understand, is the daughter of a gentleman about the court of George the Third. The young lady is very pretty, and Jorrocks himself really seems a very excellent old fellow."

"What, you are talking about Mr. Jorrocks,

are you?" inquired Mr. Barnington, looking up from his "omelette" with an air of sudden enlightenment on his countenance.

"Why yes, Solomon!" replied his loving spouse, "who did you think we were talking about?"

"Why you called them Horrocks! how was I to know who you meant?"

"How were *you* to know who we meant? why what matter does it make whether *you* know or not. Take the cheese away, Mountain, and don't make this room smell like a beer shop."

"Stay! I want some," interposed Mr. Barnington.

"Then take it into your master's room," replied Mrs. Barnington. "Go and stuff yourself there as much as you like; and send for your friend Horrocks, or Jorrocks, or whatever you call him, to keep you company.

CHAPTER XI.

"'Tend well my 'ounds."

"SEND my Sec. here," said Mr. Jorrocks, with great dignity, to the landlord of the Dragon; who, in compliance with Doleful's directions, was waiting to receive his orders. "Send my Sec. here," he repeated, seeing the man did not catch what he said.

"Your Sec., sir," repeated the landlord, "it'll be your boy, I presume?" turning to the waiter, and desiring him to send the ostler to stand by the horses' heads while Mr. Jorrocks's boy came up stairs.

"No, not my *boy*," replied Mr. Jorrocks with a frown, "so you *presumes* wrong."

"Your maid, then?" inquired the sharp waiter, thinking to hit what his master had missed.

"No, nor my maid neither," was the worthy grocer's answer,—"what I want is *my* Sec., the Secretary to *my* 'unt in fact."

"Oh! the Secretary to the hunt, that will be Mr. Fleeceall," rejoined the landlord with a grin

of satisfaction.—"Run up to Speldhurst Street, and tell Mr. Fleeceall that Mr. Jorrocks has arrived, and wishes to see him."

"Tell him to come *directly*," said Mr. Jorrocks, adding, in a mutter, "I dosn't understand why he's not here to receive me. Fatch me up a glass of cold sherry negus *with*.—Public speakin makes one werry dry."

Before the *with* was well dissolved, so as to enable our hero to quench his thirst at a draught, our one-eyed friend entered the room, hat in hand, and presented himself to Mr. Jorrocks.

"Now I wants to see you about my 'ounds," said Mr. Jorrocks, with an air of authority.—"Where are they?"

"Some, I believe, are in the kennel, others are in the Vale with the various farmers," replied Mr. Fleeceall.

"Some in the Wale!" repeated Mr. Jorrocks with surprise, "vy arn't they all in kennel? you surely knew I was a comin, and ought not to have had things in this hugger mugger state.—Whose fault is it? Where's the kennel-book?"

"The kennel-book?" repeated Mr. Fleeceall with surprise.

"Yes, the kennel-book, you know what that is surely—the list of the 'ounds in fact."

"Oh, I beg your pardon—I don't think there is any regular kennel-book—at least I never had

one—all that *I* do, is to receive the subscriptions,—write to gentlemen that are in arrear, or are likely to subscribe,—tax poultry bills,—and prevent extortion in general."

"Well, all werry useful in its way," replied Mr. Jorrocks, "but a secretary to an 'unt is expected to know all about the 'ounds too, and every thing besides—at least he's no Sec. for *me* if he don't," added he, his eyes sparkling with animation as he spoke.

"Oh, I do," replied Mr. Fleeceall with trepidation, "only Captain Doleful has had all our people so busy, preparing for your reception, that we really have not been able at so short a notice to make our arrangements so perfect as we could wish. I know all the hounds *well*."

"Then put on your 'at and come with me to the kennel. It's full moon to-night so we needn't mind about time."

Fleeceall hesitated, but seeing Mr. Jorrocks was resolute, he put a good face on the matter, and boldly led the way. As he piloted Mr. Jorrocks through sundry short cuts, he contrived to insinuate, in a casual sort of way, that things would not be in such apple-pie order as he might expect, but that a day or two would put every thing right. Calling at Mat Maltby's for the key of the kennel, he enlisted young Mat into the service, desiring him to stand by and prompt

him what to say, he very soon had the new master before the rails of the kennel. The hounds raised a melodious cry as they jumped against the pailing, or placed themselves before the door, and anger flew from Mr. Jorrocks's mind at the cheerful sound. "Get *back*, hounds! get *back! Bonney-bell*, have a care!" cried Mat, as they pushed against the door, and prevented its opening. "Perhaps you'll take a switch, sir," said he, turning to Mr. Jorrocks, and handing a hazel-rod from a line hanging on the rails beside the door. "Get *back*, hounds!" again he cried, and inserting his right hand with a heavy double-thonged whip through an aperture, between the door and the post, he loosened the thong, and sweeping it round among their legs, very soon cleared a space so as to enable the master to enter. Mr. Jorrocks then strutted in.

The kennel was quite of the primitive order, and such as Meltonians would disdain to keep terriers in. It consisted of two rooms, and the feeding troughs in the half-flagged yard showed that the hounds dined out of doors. A temporary boiling-house was placed behind, and the whole of the back part adjoined close upon the New Ebenezer Chapel.

Great was Mr. Jorrocks's surprise and indignation at finding that the pack was without a huntsman, whipper-in, or horses, and that instead

of thirty-two couple of hounds as stated by Doleful, there were but sixteen.

He was perfectly thunderstruck, and it was some time ere his rage suffered his tongue to give vent to his thoughts.

It was a "reg'lar do," and he'd wesh his 'ands of the concern at once. "He'd shoot Doleful first though—skin him alive in fact."

Fleeceall attempted to sooth him, but finding he was only adding fuel to the fire, he suffered his anger to exhaust itself on the unfortunate and now fortunately absent Captain, when he again ventured to attempt an explanation.

Captain Doleful, he thought, must have said thirty-two hounds and not thirty-two couple.

Mr. Jorrocks pulled the letter out of his pocket, and thirty-two "couple" appeared as plain as possible.

"Well, but sixteen would take less keeping, and the subscriptions would be all the same."

"But they look shabby," roared Mr. Jorrocks, "I hates a short pack.—Then who's to 'unt them?"

"Oh," Fleeceall made no doubt Mr. Jorrocks would do it well himself, "Osbaldeston did so."

Coupling him with Mr. Osbaldeston pleased Mr. Jorrocks, and after two or three grunts, on considering how far he had gone, and how he would be laughed at if he backed out, he deter-

mined to let it be "over shoes over boots," so he stuck out his legs, and proceeded to examine the hounds.

"Plenty of bone," observed he, with a growl.

"Oh, lots of bones!" replied Fleeecall, "that corner's full," pointing to the bone-house.

"Are they steady?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"Middling," replied Fleeecall, anxious to be safe.

"Vot, they're not riotous are they? Never 'unted bagmen or nothin' of that sort?" inquired our master.

"Oh dear no," replied Fleeecall, "ran a boy, I believe, one day."

"Ran a boy!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, "never heard of sich a thing! He must have had a drag."

"They bit his drag," replied Fleeecall, laughing.

"It were a young hound bit an old 'ooman," interposed Mat, anxious for the credit of the pack, "he had a bone, and she would have it from him, and the boy got atween the two.

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, not altogether relishing the story whichever way it was. The hounds were a fine lashing-looking lot, chiefly dogs, with a family likeness running through the pack. There were no old ones, and the lot, as far, as they went, were fairly average. Worse packs

are to be found in great kennels. Mr. Jorrocks remained in the kennel until he had mastered their names, and there appearing no help for the matter, he resolved to do the best he could with his boy until he could meet with a huntsman.—Ordering the feeder to be there by day-break, and have the hounds ready for him to take out to exercise, he thrust his arm through Fleeceall's, and desired him to conduct him back to the Dragon.

As they went, he lectured him well on the duties of his office. "Now, you see, sir," said he, "I dos'nt want one of your fine auditin' sort of Secs., what will merely run his eye over the bills, and write his initials on the back, but I wants a real out-and-out workin' chap, that will go into them hitem by hitem, and look sharp arter the pence, without leavin' the pounds to take care of themselves. A good Sec. is a werry useful sort of h'animal, but a bad un's only worth 'anging. In the first place you must be werry particklar about gettin' in the subscriptions. That is always uppermost in a good Sec's. mind, and he should never stir out of doors without a list in his pocket, and should appear at the cover-side with a handful of receipts, by way of a hint to those wot hav'nt paid. Now, you must get an account book with ruled columns for pounds, shillings, and pence, and open a Dr. and Cr.

account with every member of the 'unt. 'No tick' must be the order of the day, and every Saturday night you must come to me with your book, and I shall allow you two glasses of spirit and water whilst we overhaul the accounts. You must be all alive in fact. Not an 'oss must die in the district without your knowin' of it - you must have a nose like a wulture, with the knowledge of a Smithfield or Vitechapel knacker for buyin' them. Should you make an 'appy 'it (hit) and get one with some *go* in him, I'll let you use him yourself until we wants him for the boiler. In the field, a good Sec. ought always to be ready to leap first over any awkward place, or catch the M. F. H.'s 'oss, if he 'appens to lead over. In all things he must consider the M. F. H. first, and never let self stand in the way. Then you'll be a good Sec., and when I dosn't want a Sec. no longer, why you'll always be able to get a good Sec's. place from the character I shall give you.

"Now, here we are at the Dragon again.—Come up stairs and I'll make you acquainted with your missis," saying which, Mr. Jorrocks led the way, and was met on the landing by the knock-knee'd, greasy-collared waiter, who ushered them into the room, where Mrs. Jorrocks and Belinda, fatigued with the doings of the day, had laid themselves down on a couple

of sofas, waiting for the return of Mr. Jorrocks to have their tea.

"This be my Sec.," said Mr. Jorrocks to his spouse, with that indifferent sort of manner which characterises the introduction of a man for whom there is no occasion to put oneself out of the way. Mrs. Jorrocks, who had bolted up at the opening of the door, gave a sort of half bow, and rubbing her eyes and yawning, very quietly settled herself again on the sofa. Tea passed away, when the ladies having retired, Mr. Jorrocks and Fleeceall very soon found out that they had a taste in common, viz.—a love of brandy and water, wherewith they sat diluting themselves until the little hours of the morning, in the course of which carouse, Fleeceall dexterously managed to possess himself of every particle of his worthy patron's history and affairs.

A page or two from Mr. Jorrocks's Journal, will perhaps best elucidate the doings of the early days of his reign over the Handley Cross fox-hounds.

"*Saturday.*—Awoke with desperation 'ead ach—Dragon brandy car'nt be good - Dreamed the Lily-vite-sand train had run off with me, and chucked me into the channel—Called to Binjimin —the boy snorin' sound asleep!—only think, snorin' *sound asleep*, the werry mornin' after comin'

down to wip into a pack of fox 'ounds—fear he has no turn for the chase. Pulled his ears, and axed him what he was snorin for. Swore he wasn't snorin'!—Never heard a boy of his size tell such a lie in my life. Dressed, and on 'orseback by day-light—Xerxes full of fun—Arterxerxes dullish—Bin. rode the latter in his new tops and spurs—Now, said I to Bin. as we rode to the kennel, 'you are h'entering upon a most momentous crisis—If you apply yourself diligently and assiduously to your callin', and learn to be useful in kennel, and to cheer the 'ounds with a full melodious woice—such a woice, in fact, as the tall-lobster-merchant with the green plush breeches and big calves, that comes along our street of a still evenin', with his basket on his 'ead, cryin' 'Lob*sters!* fine Lob*sters!*' has, there is no sayin' but in course of time you may arrive at the distinguished honour of readin' an account of your doin's in Bell's Life; but if you persist in playin' at marbles, chuck farthin', and flyin' kites, instead of attendin' in the stable, I'll send you back to the charity school from whence you came, where you'll be rubbed down twice a day with an oak towel, and kept on chick-weed and grunsell like a canary-bird,—mark my words if I von't.'

"Found Mat Maltby at the kennel weshin' the flags with a new broom, and 'issing for 'ard

life—werry curious it is, wet or dry, soft or 'ard these chaps always 'iss. 'Ounds all delighted to see me—stood up in my stirrups looking over the rails, 'olloain', cheerin', and talkin' to them. Yoicks Dexterous! Yoicks Lucky-lass! Yoicks Rallywood! Good dog. Threw bits of biscuit as near each of them as I could pitch them, calling the 'ounds by name, to let them see that I knew them—Some caught it in their mouths like H'Indian Jugglers—' Let 'em out Mat,' at last cried I, when back went the bolt, open went the door, and out they rushed full cry, like a pent up hurricane, tearin' down Hexworthy Street, into Jireth Place, through Mornington Crescent, by the Bramber Promenade into the High Street, and down it with a crash and melody of sweet music that roused all the old water-drinkin' maids from their pillows, galvanized the watchmen, astonished the gas-light man, who was making way for day-light, and reglarly rousing the whole inhabitants of the place.

"Clapt spurs to Xerxes and arter them, holloain' and crackin' my whip, but deuce a bit did they heed me—On they went! sterns up and 'eads too, towlin', and howlin', and chirpin', as though they had a fox before them. Butchers' dogs, curs, setters, mastiffs, and mongrels of all sorts and sizes, flew out as they went, some

joinin' cry, others worryin' and fightin' their way, but still the body of the pack kept movin' onward at a splittin' pace, down the London-road, as wild as hawks, without turning to the right or the left, until they all flew, like a flock of pigeons, clean out of sight. 'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' cried I, pullin' up, fairly exhausted, at the third mile stone, by the cross-roads to Gabriel's House and Knowlton, 'Ive lost my 'ounds, and I'm ruined for ever.' 'Blow your 'orn!' cried a countryman who was sittin' on the stone, they are not far afore you, and the dogs not far afore them;' but blow me tight, I was so blown myself, that I couldn't raise a puff —easier to blow ones 'orse than one's 'orn. To add to my grief and infinite mortification, Binjimin came poundin' and clatterin' along the hard road, holloain' out as he went, 'Buy Lobster! fine Lobster!'

"The pack had turned down Greenford Lane, and I jogged after them, sorely puzzled, and desperate perplexed. On I went for a mile or more, when the easterly breeze bore the 'ounds' cry on its wings, and pushin' forward, I came to a corner of the road, where the beauties had thrown up short before an Italian plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant, who, tray on head, had the whole pack at bay around him, bellowin' and howlin' as though they would eat him. 'Get

round them, Binjimin,' cried I, 'and flog them away to me,' and takin' out my 'orn, I blew for 'ard life, and what with view holloas, and cheerin', and coaxin', with Bin at their sterns, succeeded in gettin' most of them back to their kennel. Plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant, followed all the way, indulgin' in frightful faces and an unknown tongue."

The Journal then branches off into a mem. of what he did at breakfast in the eating line, how he paid his bill at the Dragon, after disputing the brandy item, and how he afterwards removed, with Mrs. Jorrocks and Belinda, to Diana cottage, which he did not find quite so commodious as he could wish. The day's entry closes with a mem. that he had stewed beef-steaks for dinner.

"*Sunday.*—Up by cock-crow, and into the kennel. Dexterous and Mercury been fightin' about a bone, and Mercury got a bloody ear. Lector'd Bin and Mat upon the unpropriety of leavin' bones about. Made Bin. call over the 'ounds by name, double-thongin' him when he made a mistake.

"Mrs. Jorrocks in a desperation fidget to get to church. Never know'd her so keen afore. Secret out—got a new gown, and a bonnet like a market gardener's flower-basket. With all her keenness contrived to start just as the bells gave

over ringin'—Beadle, in blue and gold, with a cocked 'at on his head, and a white wand in his hand, received us at the door, and handed us over to the sexton, in deep blue, bound with black velvet, who paraded us up the 'isle, and placed us with much clatterin' in the seat of honour, just afore the pulpit. Church desperate full, and every eye turned on the M. F. H.—Mrs. J. thought they were lookin' at her! poor deluded body. Belinda, dressed in lavender, and lookin' werry wholesome. Lessons long—sermon excellent—all about 'onering one's superiors, meanin' the M. F. H. doubtless.

"After church, friend Miserrimus came and shook 'ands with us all round. Gave him 'unbounded pleasure' to see us all so bloomin' and well. Mrs. J. delighted, and axed him to dine. Five, and no waitin'. Walked down High Street. Mrs. Jorrocks on one arm, Belinda on t'other. Doleful in the gutter. Fine thing to be a great man. Every body stared—many took off their 'ats.—Country people got off the flags. 'That's Mr. Jorrocks,' said one. 'Which?' cried another. 'Do show him to me,' begged a third. 'Jorrocks for ever!' cried the children. Nothing like being a great man. Kennel at two—feedin'-time—plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant outside, still in a great rage, but didn't catch what he said. Many people came and

wondered how I knew the names of the 'ounds—all so much alike, they said, Take them a lifetime to know them. Miserable ignoramusses.

"*Monday.*—At the kennel by daylight. Binjimin, as usual, to be kicked awake. The bouy seems to take no interest in the thing. Fear all the lickin' in the world von't drive a passion for the chase into him. Threatened to cut his coat into ribbons on his back, if he didn't look lively. Mat Maltby recommended the 'ounds to be coupled this time—condescended to take his advice. Told Bin. not to cry 'boil'd Lo*bsters*' as he did on Saturday, but to sing out in a cheerful woice, rich and melodious, *like* the boiled-lobster-merchant. Axed what to sing out? Why, 'get on 'ounds,' ven 'ounds 'ang (hang) back, and 'gently there!' when they gets too far forward,' said I. Put Xerxes's head towards kennel door this time, instead of from it. Worth a golden sovereign of any man's money to see 'ounds turn out of kennel. Sich a cry! sich music! old Dexterous jumped up at Xerxes, and the h'animal all but kicked me over his 'ead. Pack gathered round me, some jumpin' up against the 'oss's side, others standin' bayin', and some lookin' anxiously in my face, as much as to say, which way, Mr. Jorrocks? Took them a good long strong trot to the pike, near Smarden, and round by Billingside, letting them see the deer in Chid-

fold Park. Quite steady—make no doubt they will be a werry superior pack in less than no time—make them as handey as ladies' maids,—do every thing but pay their own pikes in fact. Wonder Doleful don't ride out. Keen sportsman like him, one would think would like to see the 'ounds."

The Journal proceeds in this strain for two or three days more, Mr. Jorrocks becoming better satisfied with his pack each time he had them out. On the Friday, he determined on having a bye-day on the following one, for which purpose, he ordered his secretary to be in attendance, to show him a likely find in a country where he would not disturb many covers. Of course the meet was to be kept strictly private, and of course, like all "strict secrets," Fleeceall took care to tell it to half the place, Still, as it was a "peep of day affair," publicity did not make much matter, inasmuch as few of the Handley Cross gentry loved hunting better than their beds.

Fleeceall's situation was rather one of difficulty, for he had never been out hunting but once, and that once was in a gig, as related in a preceding chapter; but knowing, as Dr. Johnson said, that there are "two sorts of information, one that a man carries in his head, and the other that he knows where to get;" nothing daunted by the

mandate, he repaired to Mat Maltby, the elder, a cunning old poacher, who knew every cover in the country, upon whose recommendation, it was arranged that a bag-fox, then in the possession of a neighbour, should be shook in South Grove, a long slip of old oak, with an excellent bottom for holding a fox. All things being thus arranged, as Mr. Jorrocks conceived, with the greatest secresy, he went to bed early, and long before it was light, he lay tumbling and tossing about, listening to the ticking of the clock below, and the snoring of Benjamin above.

At last day began to break, and having soused the boy with a pitcher of cold water, Mr. Jorrocks proceeded to jump into his clothes, consisting of the Surrey hunt scarlet coat, with green collar, buff waistcoat, drab kerseymeres, and mahogany-coloured top boots. Arrived at the kennel, he found Fleeceall there, on his old gig mare, with his hands stuck in the pockets of a great dirty-white Witney coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons, which completely enveloped his person. "Is Miserrimus here?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks, on discovering the person of his Secretary. "Well, carn't wait—sorry for it—know better another time;" and thereupon the hounds were unkennelled, and desiring Fleeceall to lead the way, Mr. Jorrocks got the pack about him, and away they went for South Grove.

The morning dawned auspiciously, and there was a balmy freshness in the air that promised well for scent. Added to this, Mr. Jorrocks had cut the left side of his chin in shaving, which he always considered ominous of sport.—Bump, bump, jolt, jolt, he went on his lumbering hunter, now craneing over its neck to try if he could see its knees, now cheering and throwing bits of biscuit to the hounds, then looking back to see if Benjamin was in his right place, and again holloaing out some witticism to Fleeceall in advance. Thus they reached the unenclosed common, partially studded with patches of straggling gorse, which bounds the east side of South Grove, and our sporting master having wet his forefinger in his mouth, and held it up to ascertain which quarter the little air then stirring came from, so as to give the pack the benefit of the wind, prepared for throwing off without delay. "Pull out this stake, Binjimin," said he to the boy, as he brought his horse to bear upon a frail gap into the wood—"Jump on the top," added he, "so as to level the hedge with the ground," adding, "these little places often give one nasty falls." This feat being accomplished, Benjamin climbed on to Arterxerxes again, and Jorrocks desiring him to keep on the right of the cover, parallel with him, and not to be sparing of his voice, rode into the wood after his hounds, who

had broken away with a whimper, ripening into a challenge, the moment that Binjimin was off the gap.

What a cry there was! The boy with the fox in a bag had crossed the main ride about a minute before the hounds entered, and they took up the scent in an instant.—Mr. Jorrocks thought it was the morning drag and screamed and holloe'd most cheerily—"Talliho!" was heard almost instantaneously at the far end of the wood, and taking out his horn, Mr. Jorrocks scrambled through the underwood, breaking the briars and snapping the hazels, as he went. Sure enough the fox had gone that way, but the hounds were running flash in a contrary direction. "Talliho! talliho! hoop! hoop! hoop! away! away! away!" holloaed Mat Maltby, who, after shaking the fox most scientifically, had pocketted the sack.

Twang, *twang*, *twang*, went Mr. Jorrocks's horn, sometimes in full, sometimes in divided notes and half screeches. The hounds turn and make for the point. Governor, Adamant, Dexterous, and Judgment came first, then the body of the pack, followed by Benjamin at full gallop on Arterxerxes, with his face and hands all scratched and bleeding from the briars and brushwood, that Arterxerxes, bit in teeth, had borne him triumphantly through. *Bang* the horse shot past Mr. Jorrocks, Benjamin screaming, yelling,

and holding on by the mane, Arterxerxes doing with him just what he liked, and the hounds getting together and settling to the scent. "My vig, wot a splitter!" cried Mr. Jorrocks in astonishment, as Arterxerxes took a high stone wall out of the cover in his stride, without disturbing even the coping. To the left was a gate, which having got through, Mr. Jorrocks chose a furrow in the ploughed field that ran up the hill, and just as he got half way up, he viewed the hind-quarters of some half-dozen horses, the riders of whom, having been in the secret, had waited in the wood, disappearing through the high quick fence at the top.

"Dash my vig, here's an unawoidable leap, I do believe," said he to himself, as he neared the headland, and saw no way out of the field but over the fence; "and a werry awkward place it is too," added he, "a yawnin' blind ditch, a hugly quick fence on the top, and may be, a plough or 'arrow, turned teeth uppermost, on the far side.

"Oh, John Jorrocks, my good friend, I wishes you were well over with all my 'eart—terrible place, indeed! Give a guinea 'at to be on the far side," saying which, he dismounted, and pulling the snaffle-rein over his horse's head, he knotted the lash of his ponderous whip to it, and very quietly slid down the ditch and climbed up the fence, "*whoaing*" and crying to his horse to "stand

still," expecting every minute to have him on his back. The taking-on place was wide, and two horses having gone over before, had done a little towards clearing the way, so having gained his equilibrium on the top, Mr. Jorrocks began jerking and coaxing Xerxes to induce him to follow his example, pulling at him much in the manner of a school-boy, who catches a log of wood in fishing.

"Come hup! my man," cried Mr. Jorrocks coaxingly, jerking the rein; but Xerxes only stuck his great fore legs in advance, and pulled the other way. "*Gently*, old fellow!" cried he, "gently, Xerxes my bouy!" dropping his hand, so as to give him a little more line, and then trying what effect a jerk would have, in inducing him to do what he wanted. Still the horse stood resolute. He appeared to have no notion of leaping. Jorrocks began to wax angry. "Dash my vig, you hugly brute!" he exclaimed, grinning with rage at the thoughts of the run he was losing. "If you don't mind what you're arter, I'll get on your back, and bury my spurs in your sides. COME HUP! I say," roared he, giving a tremendous jerk of the rein, upon which the horse flew back, and pulled Jorrocks head foremost into the ditch. Xerxes then threw up his heels and ran away, whip and all.

Meanwhile, our bagman played his part gal-

lantly, and run three quarters of a ring, of three quarters of a mile, chiefly in view, when, feeling exhausted, he threw himself into a furze-patch, near a farm-yard, where Dauntless very soon had him by the back, but the smell of the aniseed, with which he had been plentifully rubbed, disgusting the hound, he chucked him in the air and let him fall back in the bush. Arterxerxes, who had carried Benjamin before the body of the pack, came tearing along, like a poodle with a monkey on his back, when, losing the cry of the hounds, the horse suddenly stopped short, and off flew Benjamin beside the fox, who, all wild with fear and rage, seized Ben by the nose, who ran about with the fox hanging to him, yelling, "Murder! murder! murder!" for hard life.

CHAPTER XII.

"A broth of a boy!"

"When will your hounds be going out again think ye, Mr. Benjamin?" inquired Samuel Strong, a country servant of all work, lately arrived at Handley Cross, as they sat round the saddle-room fire of the Dragon Inn yard, in company with the persons hereafter enumerated, the day after the celebrated run described in the last chapter.

Samuel Strong was just the sort of man that would be Samuel Strong. Were his master to ring his bell, and desire the waiter to tell the "Boots" to send his servant "Samuel Strong" to him, Boots would pick Samuel out of a score of servants, without ever having seen him before. He was quite the southern-hound breed of servants. Large-headed, almost lop-eared, red-haired (long, coarse, and uneven), fiery whiskers, making a complete fringe round his harvest moon of a face, with a short thick nose that looked as though it had been sat upon by a heavy person.

In stature he was of the middle height, square-built, and terribly clumsy.

Nor were the defects of nature at all counteracted by the advantages of dress, for Strong was clad in a rural suit of livery, consisting of a footman's morning jacket, with a standing up collar made of dark grey-cloth, plentifully besprinkled with large brass buttons, with a raised edge, as though his master were expecting his crest from the herald's college. Moreover, the jacket, either from an original defect in its construction, or from that propensity to shrink, which inferior clothes unfortunately have, had so contracted its dimensions, that the waist-buttons were half-way up Samuel's back, and the lower ones were just where the top ones ought to be. The shrinking of the sleeves placed a pair of large serviceable-looking hands in nervously striking relief. The waistcoat, broad blue and white stripe, made up lengthways, was new, and probably the tailor, bemoaning the scanty appearance of Sam's nether man, had determined to make some atonement to his front, for the waistcoat extended full four inches below his coat, and concealed the upper part of a very baggy pair of blue plush shorts, that were met again by very tight drab gaiters, that evidently required no little ingenuity to coax together to button. A six shilling hat, with a narrow silver band, and binding of the same metal, and a pair

of darned white Berlin gloves, completed the costume of this figure servant.

Benjamin Brady—or "Binjimin"—was the very converse of Samuel Strong. A little puny, pale-faced, gin-drinking-looking Cockney, with a pair of roving pig eyes, peering from below his lank white hair, cut evenly round his head, as though it had been done by the edges of a barber's basin. Benjamin had increased considerably in his own opinion, by the acquisition of a pair of top-boots, and his appointment of whipper-in to the hounds, in which he was a good deal supported by the deference invariably paid by country servants to London ones.

Like all inn saddle-rooms, the Dragon one was somewhat contracted in its dimensions, and what little there was, was rendered less, by sundry sets of harness hanging against the walls, and divers saddle-stands, boot-trees, knife-cleaners, broken pitchforks, and bottles with candles in their necks, scattered promiscuously around. Nevertheless, there was a fire, to keep "hot-water ready," and above the fire-place were sundry smoke-dried hand-bills of country horses for the by-gone season — "Jumper — Clever Clumsy — Barney Bodkin—Billy Button, &c."—while logs of wood, three-legged stools, and inverted horse-pails, served the place of chairs around.

On the boiler-side of the fire, away from the

door—for no one has a greater regard for No. 1 than himself—sat the renowned Benjamin Brady, in a groom's drab frock coat, reaching down to his heels, a sky-blue waistcoat, patent cord breeches, with grey worsted stockings, and slippers, airing a pair of very small mud-stained top-boots before the fire, occasionally feeling the scratches on his face, and the bites the fox inflicted on his nose the previous day—next him, at the "first pair *boy* out," a grey-headed old man of sixty, whose jacket, breeches, boots, entire person, in fact, were concealed by a long brown holland thing, that gave him the appearance of sitting booted and spurred in his night-shirt. Then came the ostler's lad, a boy of some eight or nine years old, rolling about on the flags, playing with the saddle-room cat; and, immediately before the fire, on a large inverted horse-pail, sat Samuel Strong, while the circle was made out by Bill Brown (Dick the ostler's one-eyed helper), "Tom," a return post-boy, and a lad, who assisted Bill Brown, the one-eyed helper of Dick the ostler—when Dick himself was acting the part of assistant waiter in the Dragon, as was the case on this occasion.

"When will your hounds be going out again think ye, Mr. Benjamin?" was the question put by Samuel Strong, to our sporting Leviathan.

"'Ang me if I knows," replied the boy, with

the utmost importance, turning his top boots before the fire. "It's precious little consequence, I thinks, ven we goes out again, if that gallows old governor of ours persists in 'unting the 'ounds himself. I've *all* the work to do! Bless ye, we should have lost 'ounds, fox, and all, yesterday, if I hadn't rid like the werry wengeance. See 'ow I've scratched my mug," added he, turning up a very pasty and much scratched countenance. "If I'm to 'unt the 'ounds, and risk my neck at every stride, I must have the wages of a 'untsman, or blow me tight the old 'un may suit himself."

"What 'n a chap is your old gen'leman?" inquired the "first pair boy out," who, having been in service himself, where he might have remained if he could have kept sober, had still a curiosity to know how the world of servitude went on.

"Oh, hang if I knows," replied Benjamin, "precious rum 'un I assure you. Whiles, he's werry well—then it's Bin this, and Bin that, and you'll be a werry great man, Bin, and such like gammon; and then the next minute, perhaps, he's in a regular sky-blue, swearing he'll cut my liver and lights out, or bind me apprentice to a fiddler—but then I knows the old fool, and he knows he carnt do without me, so we just battle and jog on the best way we can together."

"You'll have good wage I 'spose," rejoined Samuel, with a sigh, for his "governor" only gave him ten pounds a year, and no perquisites, or "stealings" as the Americans honestly call them.

"Precious little of that I assure you," replied Benjamin—"at least the old warment never pays me. He swears he pays it to our old 'oman; but I believe he pockets it himself, an old ram; but I'll have a reckoning with him some of these odd days. What'n a blackguard's your master?"

"*Hush!*" replied Samuel, astonished at Ben's freedom of speech, a thing not altogether understood in the country. "A bad 'un I'll be bound," continued the little rascal, "or he wouldn't see you mooning about in such a rumbustical apology for a coat, with laps that scarce cover you decently;" reaching behind the aged post-boy, and taking up Mr. Samuel's fan-tail as he spoke. "I never see's a servant in a cutty coat, without swearing his master's a screw. Now these droll things such as you have on, are just vot the great folks in London give their flunkies to carry coals, and make up fires in, but never to go staring from home with. Then your country folks get hold of them, and think by clapping such clowns as you in them, to make people believe that they have other coats at home. Tell the truth now, old baggy-breeches, have you another coat of any sort?"

"Yee'as," replied Samuel Strong, "I've a fustian one."

"Vot, *you* a fustian coat!" repeated Benjamin in astonishment, "vy, I thought you were a flunkey!"

"So I am," replied Samuel, "but I looks ater a hus and shay as well."

"Crikey!" cried Benjamin, "here's a figure futman wot looks arter an 'oss and chay—Vy you'll be vot they call a man of 'all vork,' a vite nigger in fact! dear me," added he, eying him in a way that drew a peal of laughter from the party, "vot a curious beast you must be! I shouldn't wonder now if you could mow?"

"With any man," replied Samuel, thinking to astonish Benjamin with his talent,—

"And sow?"

"Yee'as and sow."

"And ploo?" (plough)

"Never tried—dare say I could though."

"And do ye feed the pigs?" inquired Bsnjamin.

"Yee'as, when Martha's away."

"And who's Martha?"

"Whoy she's a widder woman, that lives a' back o' the church.—She's a son a-board a steamer, and she goes to see him whiles."

"Your governor's an apothecary, I suppose by that queer button," observed Benjamin, eying Sam's coat. "Wot we call a chemist and drug-

gist in London. Do you look arter the red and green winder bottles now? Crikey, he don't look as though he lived on physic altogether, does he?" added Benjamin, turning to Bill Brown, the helper, amid the general laughter of the company.

"My master's a better man than ever you'll be, you little ugly sinner," replied Samuel Strong, breaking into a glow, and doubling a most serviceable-looking fist on his knee.

"We've only your word for that," replied Benjamin, "he don't look like a werry good 'un by the way he rigs you out. 'Ow many slaveys does he keep?"

"Slaveys," repeated Samuel, "slaveys, what be they?"

"Vy cook-maids and such like h'animals—women in general."

"Ow, two—one to clean the house and dress the dinner, t'other to milk the cows and dress the childer."

"Oh, you 'ave childer, 'ave you in your 'ouse?" exclaimed Benjamin in disgust. "Well come, our's is bad, but we've nothing to ekle (equal) that. I wouldn't live where there are brats for no manner of consideration."

"You've a young Missis, though, havn't you?" inquired the aged post-boy, "there was a young lady came down in the chay along with the old folk."

"That's the niece," replied Benjamin—"a jolly nice gal she is too—her home's in Vitechapel,—often get a tissey out of her—That's to say, she don't give me them herself exactly, but the young men as follows her do, so it comes to the same thing in the end. She has a couple of them you see, first one pays, and then t'other. Green, that's him of Tooley Street, gives shillings because he has plenty; then Stubbs wot lives near Boroughbridge—the place the rabbits come from—gives half-crowns, because he hasn't much. Then Stubbs is such a feller for kissing of the gals.—'Be'have yourself or I'll scream,' I hears our young lady say, as I'm a listening at the door. '*Don't*,' says he, kissing of her again, 'you'll hurt your throat,—let me do it for you.' Then to hear our old cove and he talk about 'unting of an evening over their drink, you'd swear they were as mad as hatters. They jump, and shout, and sing, and talliho! till they bring the street-keeper to make them quiet."

"You had a fine run t'other day, I hear," observed Joe, the deputy-helper, in a deferential tone to Mr. Brady.

"Uncommon!" replied Benjamin, shrugging up his shoulders at the recollection of it, and clearing the low bars of the grate out with his toe.

"They tell me your old governor tumbled off," continued Joe, "and lost his hoss."

"Werry like," replied Benjamin with a grin, "he generally does tumble h'off. I'm d—d if it isn't a disgrace to an 'oss to be ridden by such a lubber!" A great fat beast!" he's only fit for vater carriage." Haw! haw! haw! haw! haw! haw! went the roar of laughter among the party; haw! haw! haw! haw! haw! pealed the second edition.

"He's a precious old file too," resumed the little urchin, elated at the popularity he was acquiring, "to hear him talk, I'm blow'd if you wouldn't think he'd ride over an 'ouse, and yet somehow or other, he's never seen after they go away, unless it be bowling along the 'ard road; —t'other morning, we had a run, and he wanted to give in during the middle of it, and yesterday he stood staring like a stuck pig in the wood, instead of riding after his 'ounds. If I hadn't been as lively as a lark, and leapt like a louse, we should never have seen an 'ound no more. They'd have run slap to France, or whatever there is on the far side of the hill, if the world's made any further that way. Well, I rides, and rides, for miles and miles, as 'ard as ever the 'oss could lay legs to the ground, over every thing, 'edges, ditches, gates, stiles, rivers, determined to stick by 'em,—see wot a mug I've got with ramming through the briars—feels just as if I'd had it brushed with a pair of wool-

combs; howsomever, I did, and I wouldn't part company with them, and the consequence was, we killed the fox—my eyes, such a wopper!—longer than that," said he, stretching out both his arms, "and as big as a bull—fierce as fury—flew at my snout—nearly bit it off—kept a hold of him though—and worried his soul out—people all pleased—farmer's wife in particklar—offered me a drink o' milk—axed for some jackey—had none, but gave me whiskey instead,—Vill any man here sky a copper for a quartern of gin?" inquired Benjamin, looking round the party. "Then who'll stand a penny to my penny, and let me have a first go?" No one closing with either of these handsome offers, Ben took up his tops, looked at the soles, then replacing them before the fire, felt in his stable-jacket-pocket, which was laying over his own saddle, and bringing out a very short dirty old clay-pipe, he filled it out of the public tobacco-box of the saddle-room, and very complacently crossing his legs, proceeded to smoke. Before he had time to make himself sick, the first pair boy out, interrupted him by asking what became of his master during the run.

"Oh! dashed if I know," replied Benjamin, "but that reminds me of the best of the story—We killed our fox you see, and there were two or three 'ossmen up, who each took a fin and I

took the tail, which I stuck through my 'oss's front, and gathering the dogs, I set off towards home, werry well pleased with all I had done. Well, after riding a werry long way, axing my way, for I was quite a stranger, I came over a hill at the back of the wood, where we started from, when what should I see in the middle of a big ploughed field but the old 'un himself, an 'unting of his 'oss that had got away from him. There was the old file in his big red coat and top-boots, flounderin' away among the stiff clay, with a hundred weight of dirt stickin' to his heels, gettin' the 'oss first into one corner and then into another, and all but catchin' hold of the bridle, when the nag would shake his head, as as much as to say, 'Not yet, old chap,' and trot off to the h'opposite corner, the ould un grinnin' with h'anger and wexation, and followin' across the deep wet ridge and furrow in his tops, reg'larly churnin' the water in them as he went.

"Then the 'oss would begin to eat, and Jorrocks would take Bell's Life out of his pocket and pretend to read, sneaking nearer and nearer all the time. When he got a few yards off, the 'oss would stop and look round, as much as to say, 'I see's you, old cock,' and then old J. would begin coxin' '*Whoay*, my old feller, *who-ay—who-ay*, my old Bouy,' (Benjamin imitating his master's manner by coaxing the old post-

boy,) until he got close at him again, when the 'oss would give a half-kick and a snort, and set-off again at a quiet jog-trot to the far corner again, old J. grinnin' and wowin' wengeance against him as he went.

"At last he spyed me a lookin' at him through the high 'edge near the gate at the corner of the field, and cuttin' across, he cried, 'Here Binjimin! BINJIMIN, I say!' for I pretended not to hear him, and was for cuttin' away, 'lend me your 'oss a minute to go and catch mine upon; so accordingly, I got down, and up he climbed, 'Let out the stirrups four 'oles,' said he, quite consequential, shuffling himself into his seat, 'Vot you've cotched the fox 'ave ye?' said he, lookin' at the brush danglin' through the 'ead stall. 'Yes,' says I to him, says I, 'we've *cotched* him.' Then vot do you think says he to me? Vy, says he to me, says he, 'Then cotch my 'oss, and away the old wagrant went, 'oss, 'ounds, brush, and all, telling every body he met, as how he'd cotched the fox, and leavin' me to run about the ploughed land after his lousy nag—My tops baint dry yet, and never will, I think," added Benjamin, putting them closer to the fire, and giving it another poke with his toe.

"What'n 'osses does he keep?" inquired the return post-boy.

"Oh, precious rips I assure you, and no mistake

—Bless your 'eart our old chap knows no more about an 'oss than an 'oss knows about him, but to hear him talk—Oh, crickey! dosn't he give them a good character, especial ven he wants to sell von. He vont take no one's adwice neither. Says I to him t'other mornin' as he was a feelin' of my 'oss's pins, 'that ere o'ss would be a precious sight better if you'd blister and turn him out for the vinter.' 'Blister and turn him out for the vinter! you little rascal,' said he, lookin' as though he would eat me, 'I'll cut off your 'ead and sew on a button, if you talks to me about blisterin.' Says I to him, says I, 'You're a thorough-bred old hidiot for talking as you do, for there isn't a grum in the world* wot doesn't swear by blisters! I'd blister a cork leg if I had one," added Benjamin, "so would any grum. Blistering against the world, say I, for every thing except the worms. Then it isn't his confounded stupidity only that one has to deal with, but he's such an unconscionable old screw about feeding of his 'osses—always sees every feed put afore them, and if it warn't for the matter of chopped inions (onions) that I mixes with their corn, I really should make nothing out of my stable, for the old un pays all his own bills, and

* Benjamin spoke truth there, for let a groom be ever so ignorant, he can always recommend a blister.

orders his own stuff, and ven that's the case those base mechanics of tradesmen never stand nothin' to no one."

"And what do you chop the onions for, Mr. Benjamin?" inquired Samuel Strong.

"Chop inions for!" exclaimed Ben with astonishment, and is it possible that you've grown those great fiery viskers on either side of your chuckle head and not be h'up to the chopped inion rig? My eyes, but you'll never be able to keep a *gal*, I think! Vy you double distilled fool."

"Come, sir," interrupted Samuel, again doubling his enormous fist, that would almost have made a head for Benjamin, amid a general roar of laughter, "keep a clean tongue in your head. or I'll knock your teeth down your throat."

"Oh, you'r a man of that description are you!" exclaimed Benjamin, pretending to be in a fright, "you don't look like a dentist either somehow—poor h'ignorant h'ass. Vy the chopped inion rig be just this—You must advance a small brown out of your own pocket, to buy an inion, and chop it werry small. Then s'pose your chemist and druggist chap gives his 'oss four feeds a-day (vich I s'pose will be three more than he does), and sees the grain given, which some wicked old warmints will do, you take the sieve, and after shakin' the corn, and hissin' at it well, just take

half a handful of chopped inion out of your jacket pocket, as you pass up to the 'oss's 'ead, and scatter it over the who'ats, then give the sieve a shake, and turn the whole into the manger. The governor seeing it there, will leave, quite satisfied that the 'oss has had his dues, and perhaps may get you out of the stable for half an hour or so, but that makes no odds, when you goes back you'll find it all there, and poulterers like it none the worse for the smell of the inions. That, and pickin' off postage-stamps, is about the only parquisite I has.

"Now, Mr. von eye," said he, turning to Bill Brown, the one-eyed helper, "is it time for my 'osses to have their bucket of water and kick in the ribs?"

The time for this luxurious repast not having arrived, Benjamin again composed himself in his corner with his pipe, and the party sat in mute astonishment at his wonderful precocity.

The return post-boy (whose time was precious) at length broke silence, by asking Benjamin if he was living with his first master.

"Deed am I," replied Ben, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "and had I known as much of sarvice as I does now, I'd have staid at school all my life—Do what they will at school, they carn't make you larn, and there's always plenty of play-time. Crikey, 'ow well I remembers the day our

old savage kidnapped me. Me and nasty-faced Joe, and Peter Pink-eye Rogers, were laying our heads together how we could sugar old mother Gibb's milk, that's she as keeps the h'apple and purple sugar-stick stall by the skittle-ground at the Royal Artilleryman, on Pentonville Hill, vell, we were a dewising how we should manage to get her to give us tick for twopennorth of lollypops, when Mr. Martin, the 'ead master, and *tail* master too, I may call him, for he did all the flogging, came smiling in with a fat stranger at his 'eels, in a broad-brimmed vite caster, turned h'up with green, and 'essian boots with tassels, werry much of the cut of old Paul Pry, that they used to paint upon the 'busses and pint pots, though I dosn't see no Paul Pry's now a-days.

"Well, this 'ere chap was old Jorrocks, and h'up and down the school he went, looking first at one bye (boy) and then at another, the master all the while hegging him on, just as the old gentleman seemed to take a fancy, swearing they was *all* the finest byes in the school, just as I've since 'eard old J. himself chaunting of his 'osses ven he's 'ad one for to sell, but still the old file was difficult to suit—some were too long in the body, some in the leg, others too short, another's 'ead was too big, and one whose nose had been flattened by a brick-bat from a Smithfield drover's bye, didn't please him. Well, on he went, h'up

one form, down another, across the rest, until he got into the middle of the school, where, for the convenience of flogging, the byes sit face to face, with their books on their knees, instead of having a desk afore them, and at last the old cock got into the line, and began h'examining of them werry closely, fearing he was not going for to get suited.

"'Werry odd, Mr. Martin,' said he, 'werry odd indeed, I've been to the kilt and bare-legged school in 'Atton (Hatton) Garding, the green coat and yellow breeches in 'Ackney (Hackney), the red coat and blue vestkit school at 'Olloway (Holloway), the sky-blues and jockey caps at Paddington Green, and have found nothing at all to my mind; must be getting out of the breed of nice little useful bo*u*ys, I fear,' and just as he said the last words, he came afore me, with his 'ands behind his back, and one 'and was open as if he wanted summat in it, so I werry kindly stuck a pin in it.

"'*Hooi!* Mr. Martin,' roared he, 'here's a bo*u*y put a pin into me,' showing his mauley to Martin; and Martin seeing who was behind, werry soon fixed upon me—'You little dirty, disreputable abomination,' said he, seizing of me by the collar, at least wot should have been a collar, for at the Corderoy's they only give us those quaker-like upright sort of things, such as

old fiery-face there," looking at Samuel Strong, "has on. Says Martin to me, says he, laying hold of me werry tight, 'vot the deuce and old Davey, do you mean by insultin' a gentleman vot vill be Lord Mayor? Sir, I'll flog you within a barley-corn of your life!'

"'Beg pardon, sir, beg pardon, sir,' I cried, 'thought the gentleman had a sore 'ead, as he kept his 'at on, and a little bleedin' would do him good.'

"'Haw! haw! haw!' roared Mr. Jorrocks, taking out a red cotton wipe and rubbing his 'and, 'haw! haw! haw! werry good, Mr. Martin, werry good—promisin' bo*u*y that, I thinks, promisin' bo*u*y, likes them with mischief—likes them with mischief, poopeys (puppeys) and bo*u*ys —never good for nothin' unless they 'ave—'Ow old's the rogue.'

"Now Martin know'd no more about me than I know'd about Martin; but knowin' the h'age that Jorrocks wanted a bye of, why, in course, he swore I was just of that age, and knowin' that I should get a precious good hiding for prickin' the old covey's 'and, if I stayed at the Corduroy's, why I swore that I was uncommon fond of 'osses, gigs, and such like, and after the old file had felt me well about the neck, for he had an idey that if a bye's big in the neck in course o' time he'd grow strong all over, he took me away, promising Martin the

two quarterages our old gal had run in arrear for my book larning—though blow me tight I never got none—out o' my wage, and would ye believe it, the old gudgeon kept me goin' on from quarter to quarter, for I don't know 'ow many quarters, sayin' he hadn't viped off the old score for my schoolin', just as if I had any business to pay it; at last, one day as I was a rubbin' down the chesnut 'oss as he sold to the chap in Tooley Street, he comes into the stable, full of pride, and I thought rather muzzy, for he bumped first again one stall, and then again another, so says I to him, says I, 'please, sir, I vants for to go to the Vells this evening.'

"'To the Vells!' repeated he, staring with astonishment—'To the Vells!—Wot Vells?'

"'*Bagnigge!*' said I, and that's a place, Mr. Baconface," observed Ben, turning to Samuel Strong, "that you shouldn't be hung with seeing—skittles, bowls, stalls all round the garding, like stables for 'osses, where parties take their tea and XX—all painted sky-blue with red pannels—gals in shiney vite gowns and short sleeves, bare down the neck, singing behind the h'organ with h'ostrich feathers in their 'eads—all beautiful—admission tup-pence—a game at skittles for a penna—and every thing elegant and quite genteel—musn't go in that queer coat of yours though, or they'd take you for a Bedlamite, and

may be send you to the hulks—queer chaps the Londoners—once knowd a feller, quite as queer a lookin' dog as you, barrin' his nose, which was a bit better, and not so red. Well, he had a rummish cove of a governor, who clap't him into a nut-brown suit, with bright basket buttons, and a glazed castor, with a broad welwet band 'all round his 'at,' and as he was a mizzlin' along Gower Street, where his master had just come to live from over t'other side of the vater, vot should he meet, but one of the new polish (police), who seeing such a h'object, insisted he was mad; and nothin' would sarve him, but that he was mad; and avay he took him to the station 'ouse, and from thence, afore the beak, at Bow Street, and nothin' but a sendin' for the master to swear that they were his clothes, and that he considered them livery, saved the fellow from transportation, for if he'd stolen the clothes he couldn't have been more galvanized than when the new polish grabbed him.

"Well, but that isn't what I was a goin' to tell you about. Blow these boots," said he, stooping down and turning them again, "they never are goin' for to dry. Might as well have walked through the Serpentine in them. I was goin' to tell you of the flare up the old 'un and I had about the Vells. 'Well,' says I to him, says I, 'I vants for to go to the Vells.'

"'Vot Vells?' said he.

"'Bagnigge,' said I. 'Bagnigge be d—d,' said he,—no he did'nt say, 'be d—d,' for the old 'un never swears except he's h'outrageously h'angry. But, howsomever, he said, I shouldn't go to the Vells, for as 'ow, Mrs. Muffin, and the seven Miss Muffins, from Balham Hill, were comin' to take their scald with him that evening, and he vanted me to carry the h'urn, while Batsey buttered and 'anded round the bread.

"'Well,' but says I to him, says I, 'that don't h'argufy. If I'm a grum, I'm a grum, if I'm a butler, I'm a butler, but it's out of all conscience and calkilation expectin' a man to be both grum and butler. Here 'ave I been a cleanin' your useless screws of hosses, and washing your hugly chay till I'm fit to faint, in h'order that I might have a night of enjoyment to myself, and then you wants me to carry vater to your nasty old boiler. A man should have double wage, instead of none at all, to stand such vork.'

"'Ow do you mean none at all?' said he, grinnin' with anger, 'dosn't I pay your old mother a sovereign annually four times a-year?'

"Vots that to me?' said I, 'my mother don't do your work does she?'

"'Dash my vig!' said he, gettin' into a reglar blaze. 'You little ungrateful 'ound, I'll drown you in a bucket of barley water,' and so we got

on from bad to worse, until he swore he'd start me, and get another bouy from the Corduroy's.

"'Quite unanimous,' said I, 'quite unanimous, in course you'll pay up my wages afore I go, and that will save 'un the trouble of taking of you to Hicks Hall.' At the werry word 'Hicks Hall,' the old gander turned quite green and began to soften. 'Now, Binjimin,' said he, 'that's werry unkind o' you. If you had the Hen and Chickens comin' to *bitch** with you, and you wanted your 'pumpaginous aqua' (which he says is French for tea and coffee) carried, vouldn't you think it werry unkind of Batsay if she wouldn't give you a lift?' Then he read a long lector about doing as one would be done by, and all that sort of gammon that Martin used to cram us with of a Sunday. Till at last it ended in his givin' me a half-crown to do what he wanted, on the understandin' that it was none of my vork, and I says, that a chap wot does every thing he's bid, like that suckin' Sampson there," eyeing Samuel Strong with the most ineffable contempt, "is only fit to be a tinker's jack ass.'" Samuel looked as though he would annihilate the boy as soon as he made up his mind where to hit him, and Benjamin, uncon-

* This is a Cambridge term, and how Mr. Jorrocks, or rather Benjamin, got hold of it, we know not.

scious of all danger, stooped, and gave the eternal tops another turn.

"We never heard nothing of your coming until three days afore you cast up," observed Bill Brown, with a broad grin on his countenance at Benjamin's audacity and Samuel's anger.

"It wern't werry likely that you should," replied Benjamin, looking up, "for as 'ow we hadn't got our own consent much afore that. Our old cove is a reglar word and a blow man. If he does, he does, and if he don't, why he lets it alone. Give the old 'un his due, he's none o' your talkin' chaps, wot's always for doin' somethin', only they don't. He never promised me a cow-hidin' yet, but he paid it with interest. As soon as ever he got the first letter, I know'd there was somethin' good in the wind, for he gave me half a pot of his best marmeylad, and then a few days after he chucked me a golden sovereign, tellin' me, go and buy a pair of new tops, or as near new as I could get them for the money."

"And what did you pay for them?" inquired both post boys at once, for the price of top-boots is always an interesting subject to a stable servant.

"Guess!" replied Benjamin, holding them up, adding, "mind, they are nothing like now what they were when I bought them; the Jew told me,

though it don't do to believe above half what those gents. tell you, that they belonged to the Markiss of Castlereagh's own Tiger, and that he had parted with them because they didn't wrinkle in quite as many folds as his Majesty wished. Here was the fault," continued Benjamin, holding one of the boots upon his hand and pressing the top downwards to make it wrinkle. "You see it makes but eight wrinkles between the top and the heel, and the Markiss's gen'lman swore as how he would never be seen in a pair wot didn't make nine, so he parted with them, and as I entered Holyvell Street from the East End, I spied them 'anging on the pegs at Levy Aaron's, that's the first Jew vot squints on the left 'and side of the way, for there are above twenty of them in that street with queer eyes.

"'Veskit!' said he, 'vashin' veskit, werry sheep; half nothin' in fact,' just as these barkers always chaff.

"'No,' said I, passing on—'You don't s'pose *I* wears cast offs!'

"'Clow for to shell,' then said he,—'Bes'h price, bes'h price.'

"'Nor to shell neither,' said I, mimickin' of him. 'I'll swap my shoes for a pair of tops if you like.'

"'Vot vill you give in?' axed Levy Aaron.

"'Nothin',' said I, determined to begin low enough.

"'Valk in then,' said he, quite purlite, 'onour of your custom's quite enough,' so in I went. Such a shop! full o' veskits covered with gold and flowers, and lace, and coats, without end, with two sides, each as high as a hay-stack, full o' nothin' but trousers and livery breeches.'

"'Sit down, shir,' said he, 'anding me a chair without a back, while his Missis took the long stick from behind the door with the hook, and fished down several pairs of tops. They had all sorts and sizes, and all colours too. Mahogany, vite, rose-colour, painted vons; but I kept my eye on the low pair I had seen outside, till at last Mrs. Levy Aaron handed them through the winder.' I pulls one on.

"'Uncommon fit,' said Levy Aaron, slappin' the sole to feel if all my foot was in; 'much better leg than the Markiss o' Castlereagh's Tiger; you'll live with a Duke before you die.'

"'Let's have on t'other,' said I.

"'Von's as good as both,' said he. 'Oh!' says I, twiggin' vot he was after—'If you thinks I'm a man to bolt with your boots, your mistaken;' so I kicked off the one I had on, and bid him 'and me my shoes. Well, then he began to bargain—'Thirty shilling and the shoes.' I was werry angry and would'nt treat. "Five-and-twenty shilling *without* the shoes then. Still I wouldn't touch. 'Give me my castor,' said I, buttonin' up my pocket with a slap, and lookin'

werry wicious. 'You'r a nasty suspicious old warmint.' Then the Jew began to soften. ''Onour bright, he meant no offence.' 'One shovereign then he vod take.' 'Give me my castor,' said I.

"'Good mornin', Mrs. Jewaster,' which means female Jew. 'Seventeen and sixpence!' 'Go to the devil,' said I. 'Come then, fifteen shillin' and a paper bag to put them in.' 'No,' said I, 'I'll give you ten.' 'Done,' said he, and there they are. A nice polish they had when I got them, but the ploughed land has taken the shine off. Howsomever, I 'spose they'll touch up again?"

"Not they," replied Bill Brown, who had been examining one of them very minutely, "they are made of nothing but brown paper!"

"Brown paper be 'anged!" exclaimed Benjamin. "Your 'eads more like made of brown paper."

"Look there then!" rejoined Bill Brown, running his thumb through the instep and displaying the brown paper through the liquid varnish with which it had been plentifully smeared.

"*Haw*, *haw*, *haw*, *haw*, *haw*, *haw*, *haw*," pealed the whole of the saddle-room party, in the midst of which, Benjamin bolted with his brown-paper boots.

CHAP. XIII.

——— "And still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew."

A DELAY in taking the field being inevitable in consequence of the want of a huntsman, Mr. Jorrocks determined upon opening the campaign with a sporting lecture.

The popularity attendant upon those he had given in London, and the opportunity of inculcating the precepts he wished practised towards himself, both at home and in the field, made him think it was an opportunity that ought not to be neglected.

Accordingly he enlisted the assistance of Captain Doleful, in whose province such arrangements seemed peculiarly to belong, and the large room of the Dragon was engaged and tastefully fitted up under their joint superintendance. A temporary platform was placed at the far end surmounted by a canopy of scarlet cloth, tastefully looped up in the centre with an emblematical sporting device, formed of a hunting cap, a pair of leather breeches, a boot jack, and three foxes' brushes. Inside the canopy was suspended

a green shaded lamp, throwing a strong light upon the party below, and the room was brilliantly lighted with wax both from the chandeliers and reflecting mirrors against the wall. The doors were besieged long before the appointed hour for commencing, and ere the worthy lecturer made his appearance there was not standing room to be had in any part. The orchestra was also full, and in it "we observed many elegantly dressed ladies," as the reporters say.

Precisely at eight o'clock Mr. Jorrocks ascended the platform, attended by Captain Doleful, Roger Swizzle, Romeo Simpkins, and Abel Snorem, and was received with the most enthusiastic cheering. He wore the full-dress uniform of the hunt; sky blue coat lined with pink silk, canary-coloured shirts, and white silk stockings. His neckcloth and waistcoat were white, and a finely plaited shirt frill protruded through the stand-up collar of the latter. Bunches of white ribbon dangled at his knees. In his hand he held a roll of notes, while some books of reference and a tumbler of brandy and water, were placed by Benjamin on a table at the back of the platform. Benjamin had on his new red frock with blue collar, cord breeches, and white stockings.

After bowing most familiarly to the company, Mr. Jorrocks cleared his voice with a substantial *hem*, and then addressed the meeting.

"Beloved 'earers!—*beloved* I may call you, for though I have not the pleasure of knowin' many of you, I hope werry soon to make your intimate acquaintance, Beloved 'earers, I say, I have come 'ere this evenin' for the double purpose of seeing you, and instructin' of you on those matters that have brought me to this your beautiful and salubrisome town,—(cheers)—Beautiful I may call it, for its architectural proportions are grand, and salubrisome it must be when it boasts so many cheerful, wigorous countenances as I now see gathered around me—(loud applause) And if by my comin', I shall spread the great light of sportin' knowledge, and enable you to perserve those glowin' mugs when far removed from these waters, then shall I be a better doctor than either Swizzle or Sebastian, and the day that drew John Jorrocks from the sugars of retirement, will henceforth remain red-lettered in the mental calendar of his existence—(loud cheers).—*Red*-lettered did I say? ah! wot a joyous colour to denote a great and glorious ewent! Believe me, there is no colour like red—no sport like 'unting.

"Blue coats and canaries," observed Mr. Jorrocks looking down at his legs, "are well enough for dancin' in, but the man wot does much dancin' will not do much 'unting." But to business—Lectorin' is all the go—and why should

sportin' be excluded? Is it because sportin' is its own champion? Away with the idea! Are there no pints on which grey experience can show the beacon lights to 'ot youth and indiscretion?—Assuredly there are! Full then of h'ardour—full of keenness, one pure concentrated essence of 'unting, John Jorrocks comes to enlighten all men capable of instruction on pints that all wish to be considered conversant with.

"Well did that h'immortal man, I think it was Walter Scott, but if it war'nt, 'twas little Bartley, the boot-maker, say, that there was no young man wot would not rather have a himputation on his morality than on his 'ossmanship, and yet, how few there are wot really know any thing about the matter! Oh, but if hignorance be bliss 'ow 'appy must they be!—(loud cheers and laughter.)

'Unting is the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt, and only five-and-twenty per cent. of its danger! In that word, 'unting,' wot a ramification of knowledge is compressed! The choice of an 'oss—the treatment of him when got—the groomin' at home, the ridin' abroad—the boots, the breeches, the saddle, the bridle, the 'ound, the 'untsman, the feeder, the Fox! Oh! how that beautiful word, Fox, gladdens my 'eart, and warms the declinin' embers of my age. (Cheers.) The 'oss and the 'ound were made for

each other, and natur threw in the Fox as a connectin' link between the two. (Loud cheers.) He's perfect symmetry, and my affection for him, is a perfect riddle. In summer I loves him with all the hardour of affection; not an 'air of his beautiful 'ead would I hurt; the sight of him is more glorious nor the Lord Mayor's show! but when the h'autumn comes—when the brownin' copse and cracklin' stubble proclaim the farmer's fears are past, then, dash my vig, 'ow I glories in pursuin' of him to destruction, and holdin' him above the bayin' pack! (Loud cheers.)

"And yet," added Mr. Jorrocks thoughtfully, "it ar'nt that I loves the fox less, but that I loves the 'ound more, as the chap says in the play, when he sticks his friend in the gizzard. (Roars of laughter and applause.)

"The 'oss loves the 'ound, and I loves both; and it is that love wot brings me to these parts, to follow the all-glorious callin' of the chase, and to enlighten all men capable of illumination. To night I shall instruct you with a lecture on dealin'.

"'O who shall counsel a man in the choice of a wife or an 'oss?' asks that inspired writer, the renowned Johnny Lawrence. 'The buyer has need of a hundred eyes, the seller of but one, says another equestrian conjurer. Who can take up an 'oss book and read about splints, and

spavins, and stringalts, and corns, and cuttin', and farcy, and dropsy, and fever, and thrush's, and grease, and gripes, and mallenders, and sallenders, and ring-bones, and roarin', etcaetera, etcaeterorum, without a shudder lest such a complication of evils should fall to his lot? Who can expect a perfect 'oss, when he sees what an infinity of ills they are heirs to? I 'opes I have'nt come to 'Andley Cross to inform none on you what an 'oss is, nor to explain that its component parts are four legs, a back-bone, an 'ead, a neck, a tail, and other etcaeteras, too numerous to insert in an 'and-bill, as Georgey Robins would say.

"'Eavens, wot a lot of rubbish has been written about 'osses!" continued the worthy lecturer, casting up his eyes.

"I took a fut rule t'other night and measured off a whole yard and an 'alf of real down-right 'ard printin' on the single word, 'oss; each succeedin' writer snubbin' the last, swearin' he know'd nothin', until one would expect to arrive at the grand climax of hignorance, instead of gleanin' wisdom as one went. There was Bartlet, and Bracken, and Gibson, and Griffiths, and Taplin, and Stewart, and Youatt, and 'Ands, and Lawrence, and Wite, and Percival, and Hosmer, and Peters, and Anonymous by 'Ookem, and Wilkinson on Lock-jaw, and Colman, and

Sewell, and Happerley, and Caveat Emptier, all snubbin' each other like so many snobs.

"*Away with them all say I!*" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, throwing out his hands, to the imminent danger of his supporters right and left. "Away with them all say I—from the trepanner of glandered 'osses, down to the sharp City prig, wot borrows and abuses his authority! (Loud cheers.) Away with all such rubbish, say I! John Jorrocks is the only real enlightened sapient sportsman; and 'ere, '*ere* from this lofty heminence I hurls defiance at the whole tribe of word-manglin', grammar-stranglin' cotation-crammin', passage-cribbin' cocks, and bids them to a grand tilt or tournament of jaw, when hevery man may do his best, and I'll make mince-meat of them all—catermaudchously chaw them up in fact, as the Americans say. (Loud cheers.)

"But, gently old bouy," continued he to himself, "you mus'nt be too 'ard on the fools, or you'll kill 'em out-right; curb your wehemence a little; come, I'll give you a drop of brandy and water;" saying which, Mr. Jorrocks retired to the back of the platform, and took such a swig at the tumbler, as left nothing, as he observed, to "carry over."

Presently he returned, smacking his lips, and resumed in a more composed tone as follows:—

"Talkin' about writers," said he, "the best informed man to my mind wot ever wrote on equestrian matters, was Mr. Gambado, who held the distinguished post of ridin' master to the Doge of Wenice. Hosmer may be more learned, and Happerley more latiney, but for real downright shrewd hobserwation, the Doge's man flogs all t'others, as the Kentuckey boy said. Most writers go out of their way to bring in summut wot does not belong to the subject, but Gambado sticks to his text like a leech. Hosmer, for instance, tells us that a hostrich can outstrip an 'oss, but what matter does that make, secin' that no one would like to go cuttin' across country on a hostrich that could get an 'oss. Another tells us how many 'osses Xerxes had in his army after he passed the Hellespont, but it would have been far more to the purpose to have told us how many Dyson or little Bartley bought at the last 'Ornеastle fair.

"Still I don't mean to say that Gambado was all over right, for there are points upon which the Doge's man and I differ, though fashion, in course, has altered since his time. He writes upon 'osses in general, and says little about those for carryin' a scarlet, without bringin' it to shame, which is wot we most want information upon. Some of his positions too are bad. For instance, talkin' of eyes, he says, some people make a

great bother about an 'osses eyes, jest as if they have anything to do with his h'action, and Geoffery says, that if a man chooses to ride without a bridle it may be matter of moment to him to have an 'oss with an eye or two, but that if he has a bridle, and also a pair of eyes of his own, it is *parfect*[*lie*] immateriel whether the 'oss sees or not. Now, from this, I thinks we may infer that the Doge, either did not keep 'ounds, or that the country he 'unted was flat and unenclosed, otherwise Gambado would certainlie have felt the inconwenience of ridin' a blind'un. Indeed, I almost think, from his declinin' the Rev. Mr. Nutmeg's offer of a mount on his brown 'oss, that Mr. Gambado either was not a sportsman, or had arrived at a time of life when the exertion of 'unting was too great for him.

"The case was this," observed Mr. Jorrocks, taking up the work, "and the advice is as good now as it was then. Nutmeg says, in his letter to the ex-ridin' master, who appears to have been actin' as a sort of chamber-council on 'oss cases:—'You must know, sir, I am werry fond of 'unting, and live in as fine a scentin' country as any in the kingdom. The soil is pretty stiff, the leaps large and frequent, and a great deal of timber to get over. Now, sir, my brown 'oss is a werry capital 'unter; and though he is slow, and I cannot absolutely ride over

the 'ounds (indeed the country is so enclosed that I do not see so much of them as I could wish), yet, in the end, he generally brings me in before the 'untsman goes home with the dogs.'

"And here let me observe," said Mr. Jorrocks, breaking off, "that that is neither good sportin' nor good language, and Nutmeg, I should think, had been one of your Macadamizin' happetite 'unting parsons, or he would neither have talked of ridin' over the 'ounds, or yet being content to draggle up after the worry, and just as the *dogs*, as he calls them, were going home—But let that pass." Mr. Jorrocks then resumed his reading—

"Now, sir, my brown 'oss is a noble leaper, and never gave me a fall in his life in that way; but he has got a hawkward trick (though he clears every thing with his fore legs in capital stile) of leaving the other two on the wrong side of the fence; and if the gate or stile happens to be in a sound state, it is a work of time and trouble to get his hind legs over. He clears a ditch finely indeed, with two feet, but the others constantly fall in; that it gives me a strange pain in my back, very like what is called a lumbago; and unless you kindly stand my friend and instruct me how I am to bring these hind legs after me, I fear I shall never get rid of it. If you please, sir, you may ride him a hunting yourself

any day you will please to appoint, and you shall be 'eartily welcome.

"To this letter Gambado replied as follows—

"Reverend Sir,

"Your brown 'oss being so good an 'unter, and as you observe, havin' so fine a notion of leapin', I should be 'appy if I could be of any service in assistin' you to make his two hind legs follow the others; but, as you observe, they seem so werry perwerse and obstinate, that I cherish but small 'opes of prewailin' upon them—I have looked and found many such cases, but no cure—However, in examinin' my papers, I have found out somethin' that may prove of service to you, in your werry lamentable case—An oat-stealer or ostler has informed me, that it is a common trick played upon bagsters or London riders, when they are not generous to the servants in the inn, for a wicked boy or two to watch one of them as he turns out of the gateway, and to pop a bush or stick under his 'osse's tail, which he instantly brings down upon the stick and 'olds it fast, kickin' at the same time at such a rate as to dislodge the bagman, that bestrides him—Suppose then, when your 'oss has flown over a gate or stile in his old way, with his fore legs only, you were to dismount, and clap your vip or stick properly under his tail, and then mount again;

the puttin' him in a little motion will set him on his kickin' principles in a hurry, and it's ten to one but by this means you get his hind legs to follow the others—You will be able, perhaps, to extricate your stick from its place of confinement when you are up and over (if you arn't down); but should you not, it is but sixpence gone. I send you this as a mere surmise; perhaps it may answer; perhaps not.

"I thank you for your offer, which is a werry kind one, but I beg to be excused accepting it; all my hambition being to add to the theory with as little practice as possible.

"Add to the theory with as little practice as possible," repeated Mr. Jorrocks,—"That's wot a great many writers are anxious to do at the present day—But to proceed—Another circumstance leads me to suppose that Jeffery was not an 'unter. In some obserwations in his Preface on a portrait of Mr. Gambado that adorns the frontispiece, the editor says that it was done by a friend from memory, and tinctured with the prejudice of friendship. 'Jeffery,' he says, 'was not so slim, nor was his eye so poignant; nor was he ever known to be possessed of a pair of top-boots himself, though he often mentions boots in his writings.'

"That I think," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "is conclusive. But then what does it prove? Why, that if Gambado, the best of all sportin' writers,

knew nothin' of 'unting, it is the more incumbent on John Jorrocks to supply the deficiency.

"But whether Gambado, if I may be allowed to speak of him with such familiarity, was a fox-hunter or not, it is quite clear that he possessed a knowledge of 'osses far superior to any man of the present day. 'The Academy for Grown 'Ossmen,' is a perfect text book in its way, and when a man has read Gambado's instructions how to choose an 'oss, how to tackle him properly, in what sort of dress to ride him, how to mount and manage him, how to ride him out, and above all how to ride him 'ome again, dull must be the dog wot has occasion to go to the Stadium* for further information.

"There is a wast of fancy about dealin'—far more than relates to the mere colour; indeed some say that colour is immaterial, and there is an old saw about a good 'oss never being of a bad colour, but the first question a green 'orn asks is the colour of the prad. Old Steropes says, if you have no predeliction that way, choose a mouse-coloured dun, for it has the peculiar adwantage of

* Many of our readers doubtless have seen towards the end of a summer's evening, a troop of pepper and salt equestrians turned up with green, enter and parade the park. These are the riding advertisements of a gymnastic establishment on the banks of the Thames, to which Mr. Jorrocks alludes.

lookin' equally well all the year round. A black list down the back makes it still more desirable, as the bystanders will suppose you are ridin' with a crupper, a practice no finished 'ossmen ought to neglect. This latter point, however, is confuted by Gambado, who says, 'be werry shy of a crupper if your 'oss naturally throws his saddle forward. It will certainlie make his tail sore, set him a kickin', and werry likely bring you into trouble.'

"How perplexin' must all this be to a beginner," exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, throwing up his hands.

"The heighth of an 'oss, Gambabo says, is perfectly immaterial, prowided he is higher behind than before. Nothin' is more pleasin' to a traveller than the sensation of continually gettin' forward; whereas the ridin' of an 'oss of a contrary make is like swarmin' the bannisters of a staircase, when, though perhaps you really advance you feel as if you were goin' backwards.

"Gambado says nothin' about the size of an 'oss's head, but he says he should carry it low, that he may have an eye to the ground and see the better where he steps. Some say the 'ead should be as large as possible, inasmuch as the weight tends to prewent the 'oss from rearin', which is a wice dangerous in the highest degree; my idea is, that the size of the 'ead is immaterial,

for the 'oss doesn't go on it, at least he didn't ought to do I know.

"The ears cannot well be too long, Gambado says, for a judicious rider steers his course by fixin' his eyes between them. This, however, is a disputed point, and old Dickey Lawrence recommends that they should be large and loppin' in a horizontal direction, by which position no rain can possibly enter, and the 'oss will have no occasion to shake his 'ead, a habit which he says not only disturbs the brain but frequently brings on the mad staggers.

"Here again the doctors differ!

"It seems agreed on all hands that the less an 'oss lifts his fore legs, the easier he will move for his rider, and he will likewise brush all the stones out of his way, which might otherwise throw him down. Gambado thinks if he turns his toes well out, he will disperse them right and left, and not have the trouble of kickin' the same stone a second time, but I don't see much adwantage in this, and think he might as well be kickin' the same stone as a fresh one.

"There can be no doubt that a Roman nose adds greatly to the gravity of an 'oss's countenance. It has a fine substantial yeoman-like appearance, and well becomes the father of a family, a church dignitary, or a man in easy circumstances.—A Roman nose and a shovel hat, are quite unique.

—Some think a small eye, a recommendation, as they are less exposed to injuries than large ones, but that is matter of fancy. The nostrils, Lawrence says, should be small, and the lips thick and leathery, which latter property aids the sensibility of the mouth werry considerably.—Some prefer an arched neck to a ewe, but the latter has a fine consequential hair, and ought not to be slighted.

" It may be prejudice, but I confess I likes an 'oss's back, wot inclines to a hog bend.—Your slack backs are all werry for carryin' miller's sacks, but rely upon it there's nothin' like the outward bow for makin' them date their leaps properly. Many men in the Surrey, remember my famous 'oss Star-gazer. He was made in that form, and in his leaps threw an arch like the dome of St. Paul's. A long back is a grand thing for a family 'oss.—Iv'e seen my cousin Joe clap six of his brats and his light porter on the back of the old Crockerdile, and the old nag would have carried another if his tail had been tied up.—In the 'unting field, however, one seldom sees more than one man on an oss, at a time. *Two* don't look sportin' and the world's governed by appearances.

" Some people object to high blowers, that is 'osses wot make a noise like steam engines as they go. I don't see no great objection to them

myself, and think the use they are of in clearin' the way in crowded thoroughfares, and the protection they afford in dark nights by preventin' people ridin' against you, more than counterbalance any disconwenience.—Gambado says, a bald face, wall eyes, and white legs, answer the same purpose, but if you can get all four, it will be so much the better.

"There is an author who says the hip-bones should project well beyond the ribs, which form will be found werry conwenient in 'ot weather, as the rider may hang his hat on them occasionally, whilst he wipes the perspiration from his brow, addin' that that form gives the hanimal greater facility in passin' through stable-doors, but I am inclined to think, that the adwice is a little of wot the French call *pleasantre*, and we call gammon; at all ewents I don't follow it.

"Broken knees is nothin'.—Where, let me ax, is the man with the 'oss that he will swear will never tumble down? Geoffry indeed says, 'Be sure to buy a brokenknee'd 'oss whenever he falls in your way; the best bit of flesh that ever was crossed will certainly come down one day or another; whereas, one that has fallen (and scarafied himself pretty tightly) never will again, if he can help it.'

At an American 'oss sale, I read of t'other day, a buyer exclaims—

"'Vy, he's broken knee'd ?'

"'Not at all, you mister,' cried the hauctioneer pertly. 'The gen'leman wot sells this 'oss, *always* marks his stud on the knee, that he may know 'em again'—*haw! haw! haw!* chuckled Mr. Jorrocks; 'Lofty h'actioned 'oss!—struck his knee again his tooth!' I once heard a dealer declare on behalf of a broken-kneed 'un in the city.

"There is an old sayin' in Spain, that a man wot would buy a mule without a fault must not buy one at all, and faultless 'osses are equally rare. Gil Blas's mule, if I recollects right, was 'all faults,' and there are many 'osses not much better. To be sure it makes a marvellous difference whether you are representin' the 'oss s qualities to an expectant purchaser, or treatin' yourself to a bit of unwarnished truth as we all must do occasionally. It is an unpleasant reflection, and says little for the morality of the age, or the merits of the Reform Bill, that, out of London, one can hardly get gid of an 'oss without more or less doing wiolence to one's feelin's of integrity. 'The purchaser has needs of a hundred eyes, the seller, of but one,' says the authority I quoted before, but dash my vig, they require the seller to make up in tongue what he economizes in wision.

"Warrantin' an 'os is highly inconwenient,

'specially when you've reason to know he's a *screw*, and it requires a good deal of management to ewade the question so as not to diminish the price. I generally tries to laugh it off, sayin' 'Vy really warrantin' is quite out of fashion, and never thought of at Tat's;' or if the buyer is a young'un and apparently werdant, I says why faith, *I* should say he's all right, but you can see the oss yourself, and can judge better nor I.'

"Men that have much business of this sort, ought to keep a slippery-tongued grum to whom they can refer a purchaser in an off 'and sort of way, as though it were beneath their dignity to know nothin' of the kind an dwished the grum to give every possible information, which the warmint knows a great deal better than do.

"A respectable lookin' grum wot can lie like truth is truly inwaluable to gen'lemen of this description. If a man is rich he may cheat you with impunity; it is only poor men wot suffer in consequence. Honesty is of no use to licensed 'oss dealers. Every man supposes they are rogues and treat them accordingly. Who does not remember old bottled-nosed Richards? When any one axed his number, he said, 'Oh you ax any shop-keeper in Hoxford-street, where the biggest rogue lives, and he'll be sure send you to me!'

"But to the warranty, as I said before, it's

werry inconwenient warrantin', and if a customer sticks to his point, it is not a bad dodge to try and puzzle him by makin' him explain wot *he* means by a sound 'oss, and if he gets any way near the point ax him if he can lay his 'and on his 'art, and say that he is not only sound but free from all impendin' disease. I once frightened a chap uncommon when we got this far, by exclaimin', 'I'm dashed if there aint a hectic flush on your mug at this moment that looks werry like consumption.' He closed the bargain immediately, and under pretence of writin' a cheque, went into the 'ouse and had a good look at himself in the glass. Tat. is werry clever at this work, and when a Johny-raw axes him if he warrants an 'oss sound, he exclaims with a hair of astonishment, '*Warrant him sound!* Why sir, I wouldn't *warrant* that he's an 'oss, let alone that he's sound' – haw, haw, haw. My friend Dickey Grunt, who lisps werry much, did a clever thing in this line t'other day. He sold an uncommon green 'orn a broken-winded 'oss, *lith*ping out when ax'd if he warranted him sound, 'Oh in courthe like all men I warrant him thound;' whereupon the youth paid the money and dispersed for a ride. Presently he comes back with a werry long wissage, and said, 'Vy, sir, this 'ere 'oss is broken-winded.'

"'I knows it,' says Dick

"'Then, sir, you must take him back and return me my swag, for you 'warranted him sound.'

"'No thuch thing my good fellow,' replied Dick, 'you mithtook me altogether, I thaid I *wanted* him thound! not that I warranted him thound.'—(loud laughter.)

"Old Joe Smith in Chiswell Street, had a wicious nag wot would neither ride, nor drive, nor 'unt, nor do any thing that a nag ought. Well, Joe took him to Barnet fair, where he fell in with a swaggerin' chap in tight nankeens and hessians, who axed him in a hoff 'and sort of way, if he knowed of any thing that would knock his buggy about, to which Joe conscientiously replied he did, and sold him his 'oss. Having got the blunt, Joe left the town, for Barnet is only a dull place, when wot should come past him like a flash of lightenin', but his old nag, with his 'ead in the air, kickin' and millin' the splash board of a tidy yellow buggy, with a cane back, and red wheels picked out with green. Presently, up came the owner on a grey poster, with the traces all danglin' at his 'eels, and jist as he neared Joe, the old nag charged the rails of the new mound, snappin' the jimmey shafts like carrots, and leavin' the rest of the buggy scattered all over the road.

"'Hooi, you rogue! you willain! you waggabone!' roared the buyer, gaspin' with rage and

fatigue, 'I'll teach you to sell sich nags to family men of fortin! You've all but been the death of Mrs. and Miss Juggins and myself—Where do you live, you complicated abomination of a scoundrel?'

"Now Joe, who is a hoiley little chap, cunnin' as the devil, and not easily put out of his way, 'special ven it's his interest not to be so, let Jug. run on till he was fairly blown, when he werry cooly observed, jinglin' the odd pewter in his breeches pocket, 'My dear sir, you are labourin' under a werry considerable mistake. If you call to mind what you axed me, it was, if I knowed an 'oss to *knock* your buggy about, and egad! if he hasn't done it to the letter, (pointin' to the remnants on the road,) I don't know what knockin' about is.'

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed Mr. Jorrocks, a chuckle in which the majority of the company joined.

"Another chap that I know had an 'oss that was a capital 'unter, and good at every thing but 'arness, which his soul disdained. Well, it didn't suit the owner's conwenience to keep any thing but wot the lawyers call *qui tam*'ers, that is to say, 'osses wot will ride as well as drive; so he looked out for a customer, and presently found a softish sort of chap in green spectacles, who having tried him to ride, axed if he was quiet in

'arness. To this the owner had no hesitation in sayin' yes, for he had seen the nag standin' in 'arness without movin' a muscle, but when the buyer wanted to tack a carriage *to the 'arness*—Oh, my eyes! that was quite a different storey; and my lord rebelled, and kicked the *voiture* to bits. The buyer tried to return him, but the owner convinced him he was wrong, at least he convinced him he would not take him back, which was pretty nearly the same thing.

"Daddy Higgins in Rupert street, had just such an 'oss as Joe Smith's—one of the reg'lar good for nothin's—and sold him to a quaker to draw his cruelty wan, assurin' him, when axed if he was quiet in harness, that it would delight Hobadiah's eyes to see him draw. Well, the quaker tried to tackle him, but the 'oss soon sent his 'eels through the splash board, and when Hobadiah remonstrated, all the Daddy did, was to laugh, and assure him it would delight *his* eyes too to see him draw, for the 'oss would never bear a pair of shafts in his life.

"But enough of sellin'—It's time I was sayin' somethin' about buyin'—No easy matter either.

"'Long, long ago,' as the popular ballad has it, Gambado said it was immaterial whether a purchaser went to Tattersall's, or Haldridge's, or Meynell's 'unt, or to his Majesty's, for it was probable he would be taken in wherever he

went, and things are pretty much in the same state now.

"The less a man knows about an 'oss, the more he expects, and the greater the propability of his thinkin' himself *done*. Oh, my beloved 'earers, 'appy is the day, when brimful of hignorance, the tyro enters on his first 'oss dealin' speckilation—Great may be his greenness, but age and experience will cure all that, and who would not barter grey-'eaded gumption for the joyousness of youthful confidence and indiscretion?—For that pure werdancy, wot sends ingenuous youth up back slums in search of 'osses advertisin' for kind masters rather than high prices, the property of noblemen deceased, or hofficers goin' abroad (applause).

"When I was a *boy*, and alack! it's long since, Clods came to London expectin' to find it paved with gold, and many wot read the newspaper adwertisements, must think it's the real place for humanity and 'oss flesh—sich shape—sich symmetry—sich action—sich temper, the most timid may ride, and sich bargains! Who would trudge, when for twenty pounds he can have a cob fit to carry a castle, or a canterin' thorough-bred, that a child may ride. The werry trials they hoffer would keep a man goin', *prowided* he could but *get them.*

"No man fit to be at large, will ever trouble a

puff advertisement. If he does, he will find himself saddled with an 'oss that isn't worth his saddle, or, may be, taken to a police office for stealin' of him. Next, let him awoid choppin' and changin'.—We know what we have, but we don't know what we may get, is a werry treasurable truism.

"Whatever may be the risks of out-and-out dealin', there is no doubt but exchangin' is by far the most certain loss; and it is one of those provokin' uncertain certainties, for a man is never certain wot he loses.—'If he don't suit, I'll take him back,' says a dealer; no doubt he will, but will he return you the tin? No sich thing! He'll give you somethin' worse, and make you give him somethin' for doin' so, and the oftener you change, the worse you'll be mounted,

"There's an old sayin' that it's easier to perceive the wrong than pursue the right; and I reckon it's a vast easier to tell a man wot he should not buy, than wot he should. Walk along Piccadilly any summer afternoon and see the seedy screws shakin' on the agony coach stands; there is age, wice, and infirmity, unaided by blisters or bran mashes. Flesh covers a multitude of sins, but an agony coach 'oss stands forth in the familiar anatomy of high bones, and yet there be good shapes and good pints to admire, but no

one would think of buyin' an agony coach 'oss! Still there is much good awoidance to be learned by lookin' them over.

"'Who wants to buy an 'oss, wot can walk five, and trot twenty miles an hour?' exclaimed a wag among the crowd before the bettin' room at Doncaster. 'I do!' 'I do!' 'I do!' replied a dozen woices. 'Then if I hears of sich a one, I'll let *you* know,' replied the gentleman; and werry similar is my sitivation with regard to adwisin' you where to purchase. One thing is quite certain, that you can't buy experience with another man's dust, but then, havin' to pay for it, he will do best wot gets it for least.

"The first step towards a purchase, is to make up your mind what sort of an 'oss you want;—unter, 'ackney, charger, coach, or 'qui tamer.' This is a most important point, especial where you go to a dealer's, where they never have less than thirty or forty, and as many more comin' from 'Orncastle, or 'Owden, or at their farms in the country. For want of this previous arrangement, I once saw a rum scene between Septimus Green, old Verd Antique's ninth son, and old Tommy Doem, wot kept the Pelican Livery and Bait Stables in Cripplegate. Old Tommy was on the eve of his perihodical bankruptcy, and jest afore shuttin' up, Septimus arrived flourishin' his cambric, with his white

jeans strapped under his chammy leather opera boots, and a tartan tye round his neck. Old Tom eyed him as he swaggered down the ride, and having exchanged nods, Septimus began axin' Tommy if he had anything in his line, jest as though he bought an 'oss every other day. Tommy paused and considered, runnin' his mind's eye, as it were, through the seven stalls, and the ten stalls, and the fifteen stalls, and all the loose boxes, and then as usual he called for Joe—Joe was the pictur of a dealer's man; red nose, blear eyes, long body, and short legs,—master and man were one. After a little side talk, in the course of which, Tommy heard with regret that the brown was at Greenwich, and the roan at Dulwich, and the white at Blackheath, and half a dozen others of Green's cut away on trial, Tommy exclaimed, with a hair of sudden enlightenment, 'But Joe, there's the cow! jest slip on the 'altar, and bring her hup the ride.'

"'Cow!' exclaimed Septimus, "I wants an 'oss!'

"'Well, but *see her out* at all ewents,' replied Tommy, in the sweetest manner possible, 'lookin' costs nothin'.'

"'But I doesn't vont a cow!' roared Septimus, bustin' with rage.

"Jest then the street gates closed, and hup came Joe, runnin' the cow as he would an oss,

old Tommy praising her haction, and the way she lifted her leg, swearing she never would come down, takin' no notice of Green storming and swearin' he didn't want a cow, he wouldn't take a cow in a gift; and I really believe if I hadn't been there, old Tommy would have talked him into it—for he certain*lie* had the most buttery tongue that ever was hung—and the gates were locked into the bargain.

"But let us narrow the field of 'oss speckilation, and view our buyer on the road to a dealer's in search of an 'unter. No man should go there in black silk stockin's, dress trousers are also out of character. And here I may observe that there be two sorts of fox-'unters—the quiet fox-'unter wot goes out werry swell, but comes home and resumes the appearance of a gentleman, and the Tom and Jerry fox-'unter wot goes out now and then, to smoke cigars, pick up a steeple-chaser, wear groomish clothes, and be able to talk of the 'ounds on the coach-box. The latter are not the men for the dealer's money. They turn the stables over from end to end, worm out the secrets, and keep a register of the fluctuations in price of each 'oss. Some act as middle-men between the buyer and seller, gettin' wot they can out of each for their trouble. 'I can buy him cheaper than you,' they say, and so they benefit the buyer by pocketin' the difference.

These are the bo*u*ys to bother a dealer's vig! A vink from them stops many a bargain, while an approvin' nod from such distinguished judges drives ingenuous youth into extempore bargains that they would otherwise bring half their acquaintance to inspect.

"When three men enter a yard, a dealer seldom opens out. Two are plenty for business—if the buyer is *pea*-green, he had better get some riper friend to play first fiddle, and he must be spectator. If he has a button at his 'at and 'olds his tongue, he may pass for a quiet fox-'unter, and so command respect. There's 'masonry' in fox-'unting, and a loop in at the linin', or a button behind, will do more than all the swagger and bluster in the world.

It is an invariable rule with the dealers to praise the bad paints and let the good 'uns speak for themselves. It is a waste of time observin' that an 'oss is large in the 'ead or light in the carcase, because a contradiction is sure to follow. It is equally useless axin' the age of a dealer's 'oss, because they are all 'six h'off.' If you object to shape, make, or colour, they will tell you it's all fancy! That some folks like a happle others a honion, and Lord So and So would give any price for sich an 'oss. As to hargufying with a dealer, that's quite out of the question, because he has his cut and dried an-

swers to every obserwation you can make, and two or three grums to swear to what he says. Keep therefore, in mind what Gambado said about being *done*, keep also in view the sort of nag you want, and don't be talked into buyin' a cow, and when an 'oss of your figure makes his appearance, look him full in the face, as though you were used to such interviews. If you have read about sand-cracks, and sallenders, and sitfasts, and thorough-pins, and quittors, and locked jaws, and curbs, you will save yourself the trouble of enquirin' after any of them by axin' the dealer if he'll warrant him sound. In course he'll say yes, and you may then proceed with your view. The precept 'no fut no 'oss,' is well to be borne in mind perhaps, as also 'no 'ock no 'unter.' Now 'ark forward!

"The dealer, what with his tongue and his whip, will keep you and the nag in a state of trepedation.

"All the good qualities 'oss flesh is heir to will be laid to his charge, and there will be nothin' you can ax but what he will be able to do—'Leap! Lor bless you, Sir, I vish you'd see'd him last Friday gone a week with the Queen's stag hounds at Slough. We was a runnin', old Sulky, wot always goes straight, when he planted the field at a six foot vall, dashed and coped with broken bottles—Not another 'oss looked at it,

and Davis declared he never see'd sich a lip in his life.'

"*Spooney.*—'Vill he go in 'arness do you think?'

"*Dealer.*—'Quietest crittur alive! Jack's eldest boy here, a lad of thirteen, driv him and another to Mile End and back, along the Strand, through Fleet Street, Cheapside, and all, busiest time o' day, and he nouther looked to the right nor the left. Lay your leg over him, sir!'

"Now this is an inwitation for the gen'leman to mount, and if so be he of the button has never been much used to ride, he had better let his friend use his leg, or should neither be werry expert, let the dealer's man throw his over. Some 'osses don't like strangers, and nothin' looks so foolish as a man floored in a dealer's yard. Still mountin' is the first *step in practical* 'ossmanship, and it don't need no conjuror to know that unless a man mount he can have no ride. Should our friend think well of the nag's looks, perhaps he cannot begin his acquaintance too soon. If he sees no wite of the eye or symtoms of wice, no coaxin' or whooa-in', or shoulderin' to get him to stand, let him go boldly up and mount, like William the Conqueror. 'Osses are queer critturs, and know when we are frightened of them just as well as we do ourselves. Born to be controled, they stoop to the forward and the bold!

"If Green'orn gets fairly up, the chances are he likes his mount. It is pleasant to find one's self carried instead of kicked off, and some 'osses never ride so well as on trial. Out then Spooney goes, and tries all his paces; a self satisfied smile plays on his mug, as rein on neck he returns down the covered ride, and the dealer with a hair of indifference axes, 'How he likes him, his mount?'

"*Spooney.*—'Why pretty well—but I think he *ray*ther pulls—I fear he'll be windictive with 'ounds.'

"*Dealer.*—'*Pulls!* Vy, if you *pulls* at him, in all humane probability he'll *pull* at you—otherwise you might ride him with a thread, addin' aside, I sells 'osses, not 'ands. Finest mouth'd nag I ever was on!'

"*Spooney.*—'Well, but you'll take a *lee*tle less than what you ax?'

"*Dealer.*—'Couldn't take a fardin' less! gave within three sovs. of that myself, and brought him all the vay from 'Orncastle—Squire Smith will take him, if you don't—indeed, here comes his grum.'

"Here the booted servant appears—

"The bargain is then closed—the money paid, a warranty included in the stamped receipt, and Spooney's first ride is to Field's, or the Veterinary College, to have him examined. One pound one, is thus added to his price.

"Thus, my beloved 'earers," concluded Mr. Jorrocks, "have I conducted you through the all perilous journey of your first deal, showin' how warious and conflictin' are the opinions relative to 'osses, and how, as in many cases, wot is one man's meat is anither man's puzzon. Far be it from me to say, that you will be much wizer from anything you have heard, for the old stager will find nothin' but what he knew before, while all that can be taught the beginner is not to be too sanguinary in his expectations.

"'Turn about is fair play,' as the devil said to the smoke jack, and it is only right that those who have inwested capital in the purchase of experience, should be allowed to get a little back. Bye and bye it will be Green'orns turn, and then little Spooney who now goes sneakin' up the yard, will swagger boldly in, commandin' the respect and attention of the world.

"We must all creep afore we can walk, and all be bitten afore we can bite. But let not ingenuous youth despair! If his 'oss is not so good as he might be, let him cherish the reflection that he might have been far worse! Let him apply that moral precept so beautifully inculcated towards his better 'alf:—

"'Be to his faults a little blind,
Be to his wirtues ever kind.'

"So shall little Spooney jog on rejoicin'!

Each succeedin' year shall find him better mounted, and at each fresh deal, he will become a wizerer, and I 'opes an 'appier man."

Mr. Jorrocks concluded amidst loud and universal applause.

A loud call being then made on Roger Swizzle, that genius at length stepped forward, and after a few preparatory hems, declared that of all the lectures he had ever listened to, either at Guy's, Bartholomew's or elsewhere, he had never heard one so replete with eloquence, genius, and information (cheers). Hunting, and Handley Cross waters (the original Spa! some one cried out), the original Spa, of course, repeated Roger would cure every complaint under the sun, and if he had'nt such a wash-ball seat, he declared he'd turn sportsman himself. Before they dispersed, however, let them pay a tribute of respect to the gentleman to whom they were indebted for such a great sporting luminary—he proposed three cheers for Captain Doleful.

Captain Doleful returned thanks, and proposed three cheers for Roger Swizzle, after which, the meeting separated.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Behold, I am thy servant."—STERNE.

PEOPLE whose establishments are regulated with such regard to lazyness, that John knows whether it is his duty to brush his master's hat, or James's, can have little idea how those in humbler life get served at all, or yet the sort of servants that offer themselves for any place that may be vacant.

Thus, great Herculean ploughmen will offer themselves as postillions, and failing that, will consider themselves equally fit for butlers; while fellows that have never been in a stable, will undertake the charge of horses and carriages, and drive if required.

The news of Mr. Jorrocks's want of a huntsman soon became known, as well through the medium of "Bell's Life in London," and the Handley Cross "Paul Pry," as by the inquiries of divers would-be sporting gentlemen, who like to busy themselves about horses and servants for other people. The consequence was, that Diana

Lodge was beseiged by all the idle, dog-stealing raffs in the country—Flash, slang-looking scamps in long waistcoats, greasy livery coats with covered buttons, baggy breeches, and square-toed gaiters, buttoning over the knee-cap. They all spoke in the highest terms of themselves, and though none of them had ever hunted, they all thought they'd "like it," and one had actually got so far in a hunting establishment, as to have been what he called second pad groom—viz, a helper at twelve shillings a-week. The following sample will show the general character of the correspondence.

"Edgebaston.

"Sir,

"I am in whant of a situation, Seeing your advertsment in the papey If a greable to you it whould sute me verrey well I have not been in survice be fore I have been A Horse Dealer for my self and with my Father But I have no doubt that I am compident to take the situation for I been used to hunting all my life and have rode in sum of the furst Steeple Chases in the country I can refure you to John Cock's Esq. Cocks' Hall, near Beccles. I have been yoused to hunt with many fine hounds—Stag Hounds, Beagles, and all, and know all about them. I am maried but no famley, onley my self and wife. I am 28

years of age 10 stone wight But as for wage I shall leave for you to state if every other thing meets your aprobation I have a friend that is Butler with Captain Boxer, at Bath, you can right to him if you think proper As E knows my self and famely,

"I remain
Your's
Obdiaint
Servant
THOMAS LOGGAN."

"To John Jorrocks, Esq.
Of the Handley Cross Hunt,
Handley Cross."

"Warminster.

"Sir,

"On hearing you want a huntsman, I take the liberty of writing to enquire after the place I thoroly understand my business either as groom or coachman and have been accustomed with hounds I live at present with John Jones Esq. at Warminster as groom and gardner where I leave on Thursday first if you want a servant I shall be glad to serve you as I am a married man

Your obedient servant,
JOHN CRAKETHORPE."

"To Mr. Jorrocks, Esq.,
Handley Cross."

"Dear Sir,

"I take Liberty of writing those Few Lines to you Hereing that you are In Want of A Servant And I Am in Want of A Situation If you Have No Objections And I have Been in the Racing Stables Seven Years And My Age is 23 And Stands About 65 foot 6½ And My Wages Will Be 30£ A Year And If you thought I Should Suit You Direct to Mark Spraggon, North-fleet And for My Caracter Inquire of Major Barns of Horton Hall Near York And My Weight is A bout 9 stone. I am disengaged in the woman way

Your humble Servant,

"To J. Jorrocks, Esq. MARK SPRAGGON."
Fox hunter
"Handley Cross."

"Sir, "Rugby

"I saw in your advertisement wanted, a single young man as huntsman with a tow days a-week pack of hounds, I should like to know what the celery will be, as I think I could fulfill this situation very well, my weight is 9½ stones, Please to write with return of Post about the Celery and where the situation is, You will much Oblige

I remain your
humble Servant,

Mr. Jorrocks." JOHN GREEN."

"Sir

"I write these few lines to inform you that I have seen in the Paul Pry paper that you are in want of a young man as huntsman to your hounds and I have sent these few lines to say that I am a marred man and has a family but I cannot move my Wife for 4 years to come for I have 8 Boys at trade and they get their meat and lodge at home so if you do not get one to suet you I should be happy to wait on you if you think that I will suit you I have been with boath fox Hounds and Harriers to take care of them in the Kennels and Hunting them in the field and I can Groom my own Horses to which I like to take Car of my own Horses allways as for my Age is 52 years and my Weight is 9 stone and has been 5 years in my last sittuation but I do not wish to give you the trouble to write back if you get one to suet you for I can be at liberty in a Week's Notice, so if you think I will suet you my wages is one Pound per Week and meat in the House likewise, and Close to hunt in so I remain

Your humble Servant,

"Please to Direct to JOHN COX."
Mr. John Cox,
(Huntsman)
Epsom."

"To Mr. John Jorrocks,
Master of Hounds, Handley Cross."

Finding the applications by letter becoming numerous, Mr. Jorrocks soon discontinued answering those that he did not think held out any prospect of suiting, but the following roused his bile into the answer that succeeds :—

"Sir,

"Hearing you are in wants of a gentleman to hunt your hounds I make bold to represent my qualities for the office. I should like to know the salary attached to the appointment also the perquisites belonging to it, and whether the Christmas presents come in pretty strong. I feel quite confident of giving ivvery satisfaction, for I am well-known to many sporting characters, if we can only agree upon terms, but I should not like to have any dirty work, or grooming to do. An early answer, directed to the Cat and Compasses, Birmingham, will meet with immediate attention.

From your's obedt,

DAVID EADIE."

"To Mr. Jorrocks,
Hunter,
Handley Cross."

(Answer.)

"Sir,

"I am werry much obliged by your purlite communication, and much regret that it did not

come a little sooner, so as to enable me to awail myself of the offer of your services, as I thinks you seem jest the sort of man—I beg pardon—gentleman I want.—Unfortunately the appointment is filled up, though perhaps £100 a-year, and perquisites to the tune of £50 more, might not have been worth your consideration, though Christmas presents would make the salary up good £200 a-year.—I does all the dirty work myself, and you might have worn wite kids on non 'unting days.

Your's to serve,
JOHN JORROCKS,
Grocer and M. F. H."

"To Dr. Eady,
Cat and Compasses,
Birmingham."

* * * *

"Here's a cove vants you," said Benjamin, as he brought a candle to seal the foregoing.

"Vants me," repeated Mr. Jorrocks, "who can it be?"

Benjamin.—"Don't know—he von't tell me, but he says his names Pigg, and he comes from the north—Scotland, I should think by his tongue."

Mr. Jorrocks.—"Pigg—*humph*—Scotland—*humph*—Shouldn't wonder if he's one of those place-'unting coves—the town's full of them."—

Without waiting for orders, Benjamin retired, and presently appeared, followed by a stranger.

He was a tall, spindle-shanked man, inclining to bald, with flowing grey locks shading a sharp-featured, weather-beaten face, lit up with a bright penetrating hazel eye. A drop hung at his nose, and tobacco juice simmered down the indented furrows of his chin—His dress was a strange mixture of smart-coloured, misfitting clothes. A blue and white cotton neckcloth was twisted carelessly round his scraggy neck—a green-baise jacket, with the back buttons almost between his shoulders, flattened upon a pair of baggy dirty-white cords, between which, and a little red waistcoat, a vast protuberance of soiled linen appeared.—His shrunk drab mother-of-pearl buttoned gaiters, dragged upon an ill-shaped leg, making his stooping, lathy figure more ungainly, and the scantiness of his upper garments more apparent. His hands, encased in shiny yellow ochre-coloured gloves, were thrust a long way through the little jacket sleeves, between which and the gloves, coarse dirty wrist-bands appeared—one hand clutched a boy's turned-up hat, and the other rested on a rugged oak staff.

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, as he eyed him, observing aloud to himself, "Vot a long-

legged beggar you are," inwardly re-olving that he wouldn't do.

"Your sarvant, Sir," said the figure, shuffling the little hat into the staff hand, while he raised the other to his forehead, and kicked out behind. "Heard tell you was in want of a huntsman."

"*Humph*," grunted Mr. Jorrocks again, "*you* don't look much like one. Who made your breeches?

"A Mike Brunton made the breeks, ne body can make breeks like Mike Brunton," replied the stranger, laying hold of the baggy cords as he spoke.

"Humph," grunted Mr. Jorrocks again, "vere do you come from?

"Ah, ar's frae Harwich last, but ar's a native of Paradise, aside canny Newcassel—ye'll ken canny Newcassle nae doubt."

"Car'nt say I do," said Mr. Jorrocks, wondering where it was; "vot 'ounds have you been with?"

Pigg.—"A vast—I ken all the hounds i' the North, Lambton's, and Ridley's, and Russell's, and Kelburne's, and Whosperer's, and all—Kelburne gav' me this coat," said he, pulling round one of the short laps as he spoke, "ard Winter gav' me the breeks," continued he, hitching them up till they nearly touched the bottom of the little red waistcoat.

"Humph," said Mr. Jorrocks, wondering at his dialect. "You can ride I s'pose?"

Pigg.—"Ride! aye, ar wish ar'd nout else to de."

Mr. Jorrocks.—"And clean an 'oss?"

Pigg.—"Aye, ne doubt, *grum* him, that's to say."

"You'll be *werry* keen, I s'pose?" said Mr. Jorrocks, brightening as he went.

"Ar's varra hungry, if that's what ye mean," replied Pigg, after a moment's consideration.

"No," said Mr. Jorrocks, "I means, are you desperation fond of 'unting."

"Fond o' huntin'! Oh faith is I—there's *nout* like huntin'"

"Dash my vig! so say I," exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, "it's the real Daffy's Elixir! The Cordial Balm o' Gilead! The concentrated Essence o' Joy!—Vot weight are you? you're long in the leg," continued Mr. Jorrocks, surveying him from head to foot.

"Ar's lang, but ar's light," replied Pigg, looking down at his spindle shanks, "ar's sure ar dinna ken what ar weighs—may be eliven stone."

"In course you're a bachelor?" observed Mr. Jorrocks.

"Oh quite," replied Pigg, "ar niver fashes the women folk.

Mr. Jorrocks.—"Vot's your pedigree? 'ow are you bred in fact?"

Pigg.—"Ah, ar dinna ken nout about that, ar's heard tell ar was dropped some where i' canny Newcassel, but ar niver kenned ne body i' the shape o' father or frind but mar cousin Deavilboger—you'll hav' heard tell o' mar cousin Deavilboger, ne doot (doubt)."

"Can't say as 'ow I have," replied Mr. Jorrocks, "is he a great man for the 'unt?"

Pigg.—"No, deil a bit on't, it was just that we fell out about—says Deavilboger to me one mornin' as I war gannin away to Gosforth Gates to see the hunds throw off, says he to me, says he, 'if thou doesn't yoke thy cart and gan and lead tormots (turnips) thou needn't fash thysel to come back here ony more, for ar'll hav' ne gentlemen sportsmen about mar farm.'"

"Says ar, Deavilboger, thou surely wadn't grudge a man the trifle of a hunt, ar that's always i' the way and ready to oblige; but he's a divil of a man when he's angered is mar cousin Deavilboger, and he swore and cussed that if ar went ar shouldn't come back—*ah!-how he did swear and cuss*—ar really think he didn't leave a part o' me uncussed—except my teeth and nails. and see we quarrelled and parted.

"But he's a good man i' the main, is Deavilboger, only he canna bear the hunds, and as sure as winter cam round the Deavil an' I were sure to have a dust, but that's all done now and

ended, so ar'll always speak well o' the ard Deavil, for he was a good friend to me, and gav me monny an ard suit o' claes, and monny a half-crown at the Cow Hill fair and such like times—dare say he gav me this varry hat ar hev i' my hand," continued Pigg, thrusting out the little chapeau as he spoke.

"But did you ever 'unt a pack of 'ounds?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"Why now ar can't say as how ar's iver hunted a pack," replied Pigg, "but ar's used to hunds, and have travelled all o'er the world anaist—Bliss ye all the sportin' gentlemen ken me, King o' Hungary and all!"

"Well, you shall eat as your 'ungry," replied Mr. Jorrocks, not catching the last sentence, "but I wants to know more about you and your pretensions—an 'untsman holds a conspikious place in the world's eye, and it be'oves an M.F.H. to be werry partickler, wot'un a one he selects, tell me now can you holloa"

"Hoop, and holloa, and TALLI-HO!" exclaimed Pigg, at the top of his voice, his eyes sparkling with animation.

"*Gently*," exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, partaking of his enthusiasm, "you'll frighten the ladies; tell me now, wot wage do you want?"

"What wage? A ar dinne ken!—we'll not differ about the matter o' wage—What is ar to de?"

"Vy, you'll have to 'unt and feed the 'ounds, clean two 'osses, look arter the tackle, and see that all's on the square, in fact."

"Ar can de all that," replied Pigg, "and break your 'ard bones into the bargain."

"Humph! *Werry kind*," grunted Mr. Jorrocks."

"Ar mean 'ard kennel bones," explained Pigg, seeing Mr. Jorrocks looked irate.

"Oh, I twig," replied our master, resuming his smile, "break 'em for the farmers — for manure, in fact — We'll go on about the wages."

"Ar'd like to have my vittels in the house, if you have ne objection," resumed Pigg.

"In the 'ouse," said Mr. Jorrocks considering, "I doesn't know about that—to be sure, you are light in the girth, and don't seem a great grubber, but 'unting makes one werry 'ungry"—

"Bless ye, ar eat nout," replied Pigg, rubbing his hand over his stomach, to show how flat it was, "and ar'd take a vast less wage gin ar were fund i' the house."

Mr. Jorrocks.—"S'pose then, we say eighteen pounds, your meat, and a suit of clothes."

Pigg.—"Say twenty, and ar'll find mysel',—ar've a capital cap ar got in a raffle, and a red coat 'ard Sebright gave me."

"No, no," replied Mr. Jorrocks, "none of your cast-offs. The 'Andley Crosss 'ounds must be turned out as they should be."

"Well, then," replied Pigg, "you mun hev it your own way, see giv me my arles."

"Your wot?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

Pigg.—"My arles! we always get arles i' wor country."

Mr. Jorrocks.—"Wot *all* your wittles at once?"

Pigg.—"No, man—sir, ar mean—summut to bind bargain like."

Mr. Jorrocks.—"I twig! See, there's a shillin' for you. Now go and get your dinner—be werry keen, mind."

Pigg ducked his head as he took the money, and retired.

* * * *

"*Murder! Murder! Here, sir! Here, sir!*" exclaimed Benjamin, bursting into the room after the lapse of a few minutes, with fear and anger depicted in his face, "That great h'ugly beast's taken the shoulder o' mutton onto his plate, and swears the taters and gravy are good enough for Betsay and me."

"Taken the shoulder of mutton onto his plate," repeated Mr. Jorrocks in astonishment, "impossible, Binjimin! the man told me he had no appetite at all."

"Ah, but he *has*," retorted Benjamin with re-

doubled energy, "and he swears he'll pick his teeth with the bone, and break my 'ead with it when he's done—I never see'd such a great h'ugly beast in all my life."

"Vell, I'll go and see arter this," said Mr. Jorrocks, shaking his head, and buttoning up his breeches pockets, as he rose from his chair with the air of a man determined to show fight.

* * * *

"How now!" roared Mr. Jorrocks, bursting into the kitchen, to the astonishment of James Pigg, who, knife in hand, was cutting away at the shoulder of mutton, to the infinite indignation of Batsay, who seemed about to contend for her share of the prog.

"How now!" repeated Mr. Jorrocks in a still louder voice, which had the effect of making Pigg drop the mutton and jump up from the table.

"Didn't you tell me," said Mr. Jorrocks, speaking very slowly at the commencement, and boiling up as he went on, "didn't you tell me as 'ow that you hadn't no h'appetite, and yet I finds you seizin' the meat wot's to serve the kitchen for dinner and the parlour for lunch—Vot do you mean by sich haudacity, you great long-legged Scotch sinner!"

"'Ord bliss ye," replied Pigg, "ar was nabbut ieasin' yon, bit bowdekite," pointing to Benjam in

"mar appetite may be a bit brisker this morn than at most times, for ar had a lang walk, but ar wasn't gannin' to eat all the grub; only that bit bastard wad set up his gob, and say ar was to be under him, see ar thought ar'd jist let him see whether or no at startin'."

"Vell, but," replied Mr. Jorrocks, calmly, "*fightin' won't do:* I doesn't grudge you the matter o' the mutton, but there must be unanimity and concord, or we shalln't kill no foxes. Binjamin's a fine boy," looking at him, "and will fulfil the duties of his station, by which means alone a man can rise to h'eminence and distinction —*hem!* and get rich, which is a werry great thing, hem!—and give satisfaction, and gain unbounded applause, hem!—so now jest settle yourselves to your dinners, and don't let me have any more nonsense"—saying which Mr. Jorrocks walked deliberately out of the kitchen, and shut the door upon the party. But though our worthy friend had thus apparently settled the difficulty, he was too good a judge not to see the importance of an early understanding between Benjamin and Pigg as to their relative situations; and, as the former had to be lowered to the advancement of the latter, Mr. Jorrocks had to summon all his dexterity to reduce the one without giving a triumph to the other. Not that Benjamin would have been

difficult to replace, or indeed any loss, but Mr. Jorrocks did not like losing all the training he had given him, and which he still flattered himself would work him into a good and cheap servant. How far our too confiding master's anticipations were likely to be realized, the reader has most likely formed some opinion for himself. Still, Mr. Jorrocks knew the boy too well to suppose that he would easily brook having any one put over him, and the way of doing it occupied Mr. Jorrocks's thoughts all the afternoon. As the shades of evening were succeeded by winter's darkness, and Mr. Jorrocks had emptied his third tumbler of brandy-and-water, he stirred his fire, and rang for candles.

Benjamin speedily appeared; but, instead of allowing the youth to depart upon bringing them, he ordered him to take a chair on the other side of the table, and listen to what he had to say. Mr. Jorrocks then arranged the candles so that one threw a light on the boy and the other on his book, without their being too near the fire to suffer from the heat. Thus prepared, he gave the fire a finishing poke, and clearing his voice with a loud hem! addressed the boy as follows:—

"Now, Binjimin," said he, "the 'igh road to fame and to fortin' is open to you—there is no sayin' what keenness, combined with sagacity and

cleanliness, may accomplish. You have all the ingredients of a great man, and h'opportunity only is wantin' to dewelope them."

"Yes, sir," said Benjamin, assenting to the proposition.

Mr. Jorrocks paused, for it was as far as he had arranged matters in his mind, and the answer rather put him out. "Now, Binjimin," at length he resumed, opening his book at random as he spoke, "this book is the werry best wot ever was written, and is worth all other works put together. It is the h'immortal Peter Beckford's Thoughts upon 'Unting. Thoughts upon 'Unting!" repeated Mr. Jorrocks, casting up his eyes, "My vig, wot a title! Take any page of the book you like, and it's full of reason and genuine substantial knowledge. See!" said Mr. Jorrocks, "I've opened it at page 268, and how his opinions tally with my own.

"'Eagerness and impetuosity,' he says, 'are such essential parts of this diwersion, that I am never more surprized than when I see a fox-'unter without them.' "Charmin' idea!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, looking up at the ceiling, "Dash my vig! how true it is. Whoever heard of a lazy fox-'unter? A man may be late for every thing—late to bed, late to breakfast, late to dinner, late into the city—but if he's a real out-and-outer, he'll never be late at the cover side. Vot, I ax, should

be done with a man wot is slack? Wot should be done with a man wot is slack, I axes you, Binjamin?" repeated Mr. Jorrocks, after pausing for an answer.

Benjamin was beat for a reply; but seeing his master's glistening optics fixed upon him, he at length drawled out, "Don't know I'm sure."

"Don't *know*, you beggar!" responded Mr. Jorrocks, bristling as he spoke, "I'll tell you then, you warmint. He should be choaked—strangled in fact!"

"Yes, Sir," said Benjamin, quite agreeable.

"Now then," continued Mr. Jorrocks, searching in the table of contents for the chapter he wanted, "I wants to tell you wot the great Mr. Beckford says respecting the vipper-in, and I begs you'll pay partikler attention, for every word deserves to be printed in letters of gold, and then, when you understand the duties, James Pigg and you will go 'and-in-'and together, like the sign of the Mutual Assurance h'office, and we shall have no more wranglin' about shoulders o' mutton or who's to have the upper 'and.—'Uunting is a thing wot admits of no diwision of interests. We must be all on one side like the 'andle of a tin-pot, or like Bridgenorth election. The master, the 'ounds, and the servants, are one great unity, radiating from a common centre, like the threads of a Bedford-

shire bobbin pillow—hem—and all that sort o' thing—Now," continued Mr. Jorrocks, turning to the book,—" here's the chapter wot I wonts, —No. 9, page one hundred and twenty-two, and again, let me entreat your 'ernest attention. Mr. Jorrocks then commenced reading as follows :—

" ' With regard to the vipper-in, he should be attentive and obedient to the 'untsman ;'---attentive and obedient to the 'untsman, you hear, Binjimin, ' that is to say, always on the look-out for orders, and ready to obey them—not 'anging back, shufflin', and tryin' to excuse himself, but cheerful and willin', and as his 'oss,' says the immortal author will probably have most to do, the lighter he is the better, though if he be a good 'ossman the objection of his weight will be sufficiently counterbalanced.'

" Then, mark wot he says—

" ' He must not be conceited.'—That's a beautiful idea," observed Mr. Jorrocks, fixing his eyes on the boy, and one to which I must 'eartily say ' ditto.'

" ' He must *not* be conceited !' No, indeed, he must not, if he's to serve under me, and wishes to escape the acquaintance of my big vip. No conceited beggar will ever do for J. J. I had one formerly,' " continued Mr. Jorrocks, reading on, " ' who, instead of stoppin' the 'ounds as he ought, would try to kill a fox by himself.—This fault is unpardonable.' :

"Dash my vig if it isn't" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, "a nasty shabby, selfish trick into the bargain.—'Ow I would trounce a chap wot I caught at that game—I'd teach him to kill foxes by himself. But hark to me again, Binjimin."

"'He should always maintain to the 'untsman's holloa, and stop such hounds as diwide from it.'

"That's excellent sense and plain English," observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking at the boy.

"'When stopped, he should get forward with them, after the 'untsman.'

"Good sense again," observed Mr. Jorrocks.

"'He must always be content to act an under part.'

"Mark those words, Binjimin, and let them be engraved on your mind's memory."

"'He must always be content to act an under part.'

Mr. Jorrocks then omitted the qualifying sentence that follows, and proceeded in his reading.

"'You have heard me say, that when there is much riot, I prefer an excellent vipper-in to an excellent 'untsman. The opinion, I believe, is new; I must therefore, endeavour to explain it. My meaning is this---that I think I should have better sport, and kill more foxes with a moderate 'untsman, and an excellent vipper-in, than

with the best of 'untsmen without such an assistant. You will say, perhaps, that a good 'untsman will make a good vipper-in; not such, however, as I mean;---his talent must be born with him.

" ' His talent must be born with him,' repeated Mr. Jorrocks, " that is to say, he must have the bump of Fox-un-ta-tive-ness strongly deweloped,' ---adding to himself " wonder if that beggar, Binjamin, has it."

" ' My reasons are, that good 'ounds (bad I would not keep)—Nor I, either,'—observed Mr. Jorrocks,—" ' oftener need the one than the other; and genius, which in a vipper-in, if attended by obedience, his first requisite, can do no hurt: in an 'untsman, is a dangerous, though a desirable quality; and if not accompanied with a large share of prudence, and I may say, 'umility, will oftentimes spoil your sport and hurt your 'ounds. A gentleman told me that he heard the famous Will Dean, when his 'ounds were runnin' hard in a line with Daventry, from whence they were at that time many miles distant, swear exceedingly at the vipper-in.'

" A werry improper proceedin' on his part," observed Mr. Jorrocks," without looking off the book.

" ' Sayin', *wot business have you here?*---the man was amazed at the question----*why don't*

you know,' said he, 'and *be d—d to you, that the great earth at Daventry is open?* The man got forward and reached the earth just time enough to see the fox go in.'

"Ow provokin'" observed Mr. Jorrocks, "absolutely distressin'—enough to make the Archbishop of York swear."

Here, a loud snore interrupted our friend, and looking up, Mr. Jorrocks discovered Benjamin sound asleep, with his head hanging over his left shoulder. Shutting the book in disgust, he took a deliberate aim at his whipper-in's head, and discharged the volume with such precision, that he knocked the back off the book.

Benjamin ran roaring out of the room.

CHAPTER XV.

"e ancientest house, and the best for housekeeping in this county, or the next; and though the master of it write but yeoman, I know no esquire like him."—MERRY BEGGARS.

"Imitation is the sincerest flattery."—LACON.

"DASH my vig, if here b'aint Stubbs!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, as the pawing of a horse at the arched gateway of Diana Lodge, caused him to look up from his breakfast.

"Stubbs!" exclaimed Mrs. Jorrocks.

"Stubbs!" repeated Belinda, with a blush and a smile; and Jorrocks ran foul of Betsey in the passage, as she came to announce that "Mr. Stubbs was at the gate."

Charles Stubbs was just four-and-twenty—handsome, witty, and gay, he was welcome wherever he went. In height he was just five feet ten, full-limbed, but not coarse, with a cleanness of make and shape that bespoke strength and muscular activity. His dark brown hair clustered in unstudied locks upon a lofty forehead, while bright brown eyes beamed through

the long fringe that encircled them, giving life and animation to a dark intelligent countenance.

Charles was the only son of a rich Yorkshire yeoman - of a man who, clinging to the style of his ancestors, called himself gentleman, instead of esquire—Gentlemen they had been styled for many generations, and son had succeeded sire without wishing for a change,

The old lattice-windowed manor-house, substantial, and stone-roofed, stood amid lofty oaks, upon a gentle eminence above the bend of a rapid river—myriads of rooks nestled in the branches, and the rich meadows around were studded with gigantic oaks, and venerable weather-beaten firs. The finest flocks and herds grazed in the pastures, ducks were on the pond, pigs and geese revelled in the stubbles, while the spacious yard at the back of the house, contained Dorking fowls, the finest turkeys, and the best of cows. Old Stubbs was in short a gentleman farmer. His wife had been dead some years, and Charles and a daughter were the only ties that bound him to the world.

The common desire of seeing one's son better than one's self, induced old Stubbs to give Charles a good education, not that he sent him to College, but he placed him at a good Yorkshire school, which, just as he was leaving, and the old gentle-

man was wondering "what to make of him," he happened, while serving at York assizes, to be struck with the easy eloquence of a neighbour's son, whom he remembered a most unpromising boy, that he determined to see if Charles would not train from the saddle and gun and make a barrister too.

Having ascertained the line of study that gentleman had pursued, in due course, old Stubbs and his son started for London, per Highflyer, the father inside and the son on the box. The Piazza Coffee House had the honour of receiving them, and after a week spent in sight seeing, during which they each had their pockets picked half a dozen times while staring into the shop windows, they found themselves one fine morning at the chambers of the great Mr. Snarle, in Lincoln's Inn Square.

Mr. Snarle was a great conveyancer, his opinion was nearly as good as law, and having plenty to do himself, he took as many pupils as ever he could get, to help each other to do nothing. Each of these paid him a hundred guineas a year, in return for which they had the run of a dingey, carpetless room, the use of some repulsive-looking desks, and liberty to copy twenty volumes of manuscript precedents, that the great Mr. Snarle had copied himself when a pupil with great Mr. somebody else.

The chapel clock was striking nine as father and son squeezed through the iron bars in the Portugal Street entrance to Lincoln's Inn, and before they got to the uncouth outer door that shuts in the set, the great conveyancer had handed his great coat to his bustling clerk, and was pulling a little brown wig straight, preparatory to setting to for the day. The newly-lit fire, shed a scanty ray over the cheerless comfortless apartment, which was fitted up with a large library-table piled with dusty papers, and a rag of a carpet under it, three or four faded morocco chairs, and a large glass book-case, with an almanack flopping in front,

"Good morning, gentlemen," said the parchment-faced old man, as the clerk ushered the fresh fly into the spider's web. "Hope to make your better acquaintance," bowing to each.

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Old Stubbs would have sat down and told him all his hopes and fears, but Mr. Snarle cut short his dialogue by looking at his watch and producing a little red volume indorsed CASH BOOK, he politely inquired what name he should enter, and then observing that his clerk would receive the fee, and show Mr. Charles what to do, he civilly bowed them into the outer room.

Contrasting Mr. Snarle's brevity with his country solicitor's loquacity, old Stubbs told over his

hundred guineas to Mr. Bowker, the aforesaid clerk; and just as he was leaving Lincoln's Inn, his mind received consolation for the otherwise unpromising investment, by seeing the Lord Chancellor arrive in his coach, and enter his court, preceded by the mace and other glittering insignia of office. "Who knows," thought old Stubbs to himself, "but Charles may some day occupy that throne;" and an indistinct vision flitted across the old man's mind, of stuffing the woolsack with the produce of his own sheep.

Shortly after, with an aching heart and fervent prayers for his son's happiness, the old gentleman returned to Yorkshire; and Charles, having removed his portmanteau from the Piazza to a first-floor lodging in Hadlow Street, Burton Crescent, made his second appearance at the chambers of Mr. Snarle.

* * * *

"Oh, it's *you!*" exclaimed Mr. Bowker, answering the gentle *rat-tat-tat* at the outer door, "come in, Sir, come in—no occasion to knock!—No ceremony!—Paid your footing you know—One of *us*."

Mr. Bowker, or, Bill Bowker, as he was generally called, was a stout, square-built, ruddy-complexioned, yellow-haired, bustling, middle-aged man, with a great taste for flash clothes and jewellery. On the present occasion, he sported a smart nut-brown coat, with a velvet collar; a sky-

blue satin stock, secured by numerous pins and brooches; a double-breasted red tartan waistcoat, well laid back; with brownish drab stockingnette pantaloons, and hessian boots. A great bunch of Mosaic seals dangled from a massive chain of the same material; and a cut steel guard, one passing over his waistcoat, secured a pair of mother-of-pearl-cased eye-glasses, though Bill was not in the least short-sighted.

"You're early," said Bowker, as Charles deposited a dripping umbrella in the stand. "You don't look like a sap either," added he, eyeing Charles in a free and easy sort of way, for Bill was a real impudent fellow.

"What is the right hour?" inquired Charles, with a schoolboy sort of air.

"Right hour!" exclaimed Bill, "*any time you like*—saps come at opening, others at noon, the honourable not till afternoon. There are two chaps copying precedents now, that the laundress left here at ten last night—(*tinkle*, *tinkle*, *tinkle*, went a little hand bell). There's old Snarle, observed Bill, bundling off, adding, as he went, "be back to you directly."

* * * *

"Confound these covenants for quiet enjoyment!" muttered he, returning and opening a pigeon-holed cupboard, labelled like the drawers against a chemist's shop wall; "I get no quiet

enjoyment for them I know. One, two, three—there—three and one left," returning a few sheets of manuscript to their hole, "free from incumbrances." "Wish I was," thought Bill—"and for further assurance—one, two, three, counted Bill, "now let's see if he'll have the further assurance to ask for any more to-day."

* * * * *

"Well now, what can I do for you?" inquired he, returning from the delivery of his "common forms." There's Squelchback's settlement, that most pupils copy—five hundred pages! produced ten issues, an arbitration, and a Chancery suit—Great precedent!

"But I think I've something in my pea-jacket that will suit you better," observed Bill, taking up a great coarse large-buttoned pilot jacket, and producing a paper from the pocket. "There," said he opening it out, "there's 'Bell's Life in London,' you'll see a letter from me signed 'Ajax.' Bring it back when you've done, and don't let the Honourable catch it or he'll burn it." Saying which, Bill presented our pupil with the paper, and opening the door of an adjoining apartment, ushered Charles into a room on the right, in which sat two youths in very seedy coats, copying away out of manuscript books.

"Mr. Stubbs, gentlemen!" exclaimed Bill with an air of importance, "Mr. Frost, Mr. Stubbs;

Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Frost; Mr. Jones, Mr. Stubbs; Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Jones."

Mr. Frost and Mr. Jones rose from their chairs, and greeted Mr. Stubbs much in the manner of debtors receiving a chum into their already over-crowded apartment. Frost and Jones were both working men; with their ways to make in the world, they had paid their hundred guineas for a high sounding name, and betaken themselves to the mechanical drudgery of precedent copying, with an industry worthy of a better direction. Old Snarle sometimes had them in to settle drafts that either had drawn, but the majority of their instruction consisted in reperusing what he had settled without the benefit of the "why and wherefore." Old Snarle was too crusty, and too high in the profession to condescend to explain.

Stubbs's early appearance at Chambers inspired hopes that he was going to be a working man, but the sight of "Bell's Life" demolished the idea, and the conversation died out as the pupils gradually resumed their weary occupations.

"The Life" was uncommonly lively that morning; there had been a great fight at No Man's Land, between Big-headed Bob and the Pet of the Fancy, which appeared clothed in all the glowing language with which the editor colours his pugilistic accounts. How Big-head was caught, and his nob put in chancery, how he

sent the Pet's teeth down his trap in return, how both were floored, and picked up by their seconds with their claret corks out.

Then there was a host of correspondence; complaints against stewards; accounts of races; nints to judges; and Ajax's letter, in which he assumed the toga of his master, and dating from Lincoln's Inn, gave some very queer law respecting landlord and tenant. The challenges too were numerous. Ugly Borrock of Bristol, would eat boiled mutton and turnips with any man in England; Tom Jumper had a terrier he would match against any dog of his weight for ten sovereigns, to be heard of at the Jews Harp, City Road; Jem Scamp could be backed to whistle; Tom King to run on all fours; and the Lord knows what else.

The advertisements too, were peculiar. In addition to the usual inquiry after hounds, and offers of horses, there were a suit of Daniel Lambert's clothes for sale, a preserved boa constrictor serpent, notice of vocalisation and frontal-frapidigitation, at the Coal-hole, and meeting of the judge and jury society at the Garrick's head.

Charles kept reading and wondering, amid occasional interruptions from the arrival and introduction of pupils. They were mostly gentlemenly men, somewhat choaked into idleness by the prolixity of Squelchback's settlement.

Indeed, their chief claims to the title of reading men consisted in the perusal of the newspapers, of which old Snarle furnished the Times, and they clubbed for the Chronicle. Bowker's "Life" was well-known, and what with it and a pair of white cord trousers, Charles had on, they made up their minds that he was a "sporting man."

Between twelve and one o'clock, all the gentlemen, except the honourable, had arrived, and the old question of "fire" or "no fire," was broached. This had been an open question in the Chambers ever since old Snarle commenced taking double the number of pupils the room would accommodate, and as it furnished great scope for eloquence and idleness, the debate frequently lasted a couple of hours, during which time the Sap's used to sneak out to dinner, generally getting back in time to vote. This day they stayed, expecting the new pupil would "hold forth," but he was so absorbed with Bell's Life, that when called upon by the chair, he gave a silent vote; and just as Bill Bowker answered the bell, and let off his old joke about issuing a fiery facias, "the honourable" arrived, and the room was full.

The Hon. Henry Lollington, the ninth son of an Earl, was quite a west-end man, and what is generally called a *petite maitre*. He was a tall, drawling, dancing sort of a man, in great request

at Almack's, and had a perfect abhorrence of any thing coarse or common-place. He was a mortal enemy to Mr. Bowker, who he kept at arm's length, instead of treating as an equal as some of the pupils did.

"Mr. Bowkar," drawled he, as he encountered that worthy in the passage, "bring me a piece of papar, and let me give you orders about my lettars—I'm going to Bath."

"Yes, my Lud!" responded Bill, in a loud tone, to let Charles hear what a great man they had among them.

"Dem you, Mr. Bowkar, I'm not a Lord," responded the Hon. Mr. Lollington.

"*Beg pardon, my Lud!*" replied the imperturbable Bill, bustling out.

Charles at this moment had got into the notices to correspondents, and was chuckling at their humorous originality.

"Suppose one man to wilfully fire at another with intention of taking away his life, but accidentally misses his aim and kills another, will the laws of our country find this man guilty of wilful murder?" asked a correspondent.

"No," replied the Editor, "but a jury will, and he will be comfortably hanged"

"A snake is not a 'barber' although he 'curls.'—'The querist is not snake-headed,' was the answer to another."

"We are not aware that a negro boiled, turns white.—If *Niger* will boil one of his children and it turns black, the problem will be solved," he observed to another.

"J. G.—The 'respectable class of servants' alluded to are very properly employed in turning the mangle, we wish in their leisure hours, they would turn J. G. inside out."

"The best cure for carbuncles is to rub them with cheese, and sleep in the domicile of mice, who will eat them off in a night."

"The masculine for 'flirt' is a cock flirt, if there be such a wretch."

"Apopos.—Hand-shaking is vulgar in polite society upon merely meeting ladies.—Pay your respects to the ladies first, married before single."

"Magdalen.—A gentleman may jilt as well as a lady."

"J. N.—We are not skilled in undertakers' etiquette, but we should say every alternate shutter would be sufficiently respectful, and all on the day of death and funeral."

"Mr. J. B. if about to become a bridegroom, had better dress like a gentleman and avoid all flashy rubbish; a blue coat, gilt buttons, and light trowsers would be perfectly correct."

"A 'catometer' is an instrument to ascertain the number of mice in a barn. It is sold by the patentees, Grimalkin and Co., *Ratcliffe* Highway."

"T. F.—There is no parliamentary reward for the discovery of perpetual motion, but there is for a donkey that can sing 'God save the Queen.'"

The following American story graced the columns of general information:

"The Negro and the Cheese.—The Boston Post says, that up at the west end of that city there is a good-natured, fun-making negro named Parsis, who hovers round the grocery stores in that neighbourhood rather more than is desirable. Like many other gentlemen of colour, he prides himself upon the thickness of his skull, and he is always up for a bet upon his butting powers, and well he may be, for his head is hard enough for a battering ram. The other day he made a bet in a store that he could butt in the head of a flour barrel, and he succeeded. He then took up a bet to drive it through a very large cheese, which was to be covered with a crash cloth to keep his wool clear of cheese-crumbs. The cheese, thus enveloped, was placed in a proper position, and Parsis started off like a locomotive, buried his head up to his ears in the inviting target. Parsis now began to feel himself irresistible, and talked up 'purty considerable.' A plan, however, was soon contrived to take the conceit out of him. There being some grindstones in the store for sale, one of them was privately taken up, and wrapped up the same manner as the cheese had been, and looked precisely as if it were a second cheese, and Parsis readily took another bet for 9d. that he would butt his head through it as easy as he had sent it through the first. The interest of the spectators in the operation became intense. Every thing was carefully adjusted, and upon the word being given, Parsis darted like an arrow at the ambush grindstone, he struck it fair in the centre, and in the next instant lay sprawling on the floor, upon which he recoiled. For some minutes he lay speechless, and then he raised himself slowly on his knees, and scratching his head, said, with a squirming voice—'Berry hard cheese dat, massa! Dey skim de milk too much altogether before dey make him, dat's a fact.'"

At length, amid many chuckles, having fairly exhausted its contents, in compliance with Bill Bowker's request, Charles left the room for the purpose of returning his paper. As he departed, Mr. Lollington eyed him through his glass, and with air of well-feigned astonishment, exclaimed, as Charles closed the door,

"Surely, that isn't Young Dutch Sem we've got among us!"

"Well," said Bill Bowker, flourishing his seals, as he received the paper from Charles, "that's *something like*, isn't it? And how do you like the Honourable? By the way, I forgot to introduce you! Never mind, soon get acquainted —manner against him—but a good-hearted fellow when you know him. Saw him give a gal half-a-crown once for picking up his glove—noble, wasn't it? Your fiddle-strings will begin to grumble, I guess, for want of your dinner, and, by the way, that reminds me, if you havn't got yourself suited for lodging, we have an excellent first floor disengaged, and Mrs. B. and her sister will be happy to do for you — Smart girl! — Dances at the 'Cobourg;'" and thereupon Bill, who had exchanged his fine brown coat for a little grey butler's pantry-looking jacket, kimbo'd his arms, pointed his toe, and pirouetted in the middle of his office.

Charles replied, that he had just taken lodgings in Hadlow Street.

"What at the feather-maker's?" inquired Bowker, balancing on one leg.

"No," replied Charles; "at Mrs. Hall's, a widow woman's number twenty something."

"I know her!" exclaimed Bill, resuming both feet, "left-hand side of the way, going up—D—d bitch she is, too (aside); pawned her last lodger's linen—Well, perhaps you'll bear *us* in mind, in case she don't suit—Quiet house—no children—

private door—sneck key—social party. You'll find London deuced dull without acquaintance."

This last observation came home with uncommon keenness, for Charles had begun to feel the full force of that London loneliness, which damps the spirit of many an ardent genius from the country. At their own market town of Boroughbridge, he met familiar faces at every turn, while, in London, all hurried on, or looked as they would at an indifferent object—a dog or a post. The style of living too disgusted him.

Instead of the comfortable well-stored table, and cheerful fire, he had been accustomed to at home, he had to stew into hot chop-houses, where they doled out their dinners in portions, and a frowsy waiter kept whisking a duster, to get him away the moment his dinner was done. The dull freedom of manhood did not compensate for the joyousness of boyish restraint.

Mr. Bowker did not give him much time for reflection—"Should have been glad to have taken you to the Cobourg to-night," observed he, "but have a particular engagement, and that reminds me, I must get one of our saps to answer the door when I go, for I must be off before seven. Have to meet a particular friend of mine, a great fox-hunter, to introduce him at the Green Dragon Yard, where he wants to choose a terrier.—Dare say I could take you if you liked?"

Charles had a taste for terriers, and no taste

for his own society, and without ascertaining what Bowker's offer amounted to, he gladly accepted it, and just as that worthy had fixed for him to meet him at his snuff and cigar warehouse in Eagle Street, Red Lion Square, old Snarle tinkled the bell for his biscuit, and Charles returned to the pupils' room.

Having settled, on the motion of Mr. Lollington, that Charles was a snob, he met with little encouragement from his brother pupils. They answered his questions, and were civil, but that was all. There was no approach to sociality, and as a dirty, slip-shod straw-bonneted hag of a laundress, scattered some block tin candlesticks with thick-wicked candles about the pupils' room, Charles repaired to a neighbouring chop-house, to kill time, until he was due at Mr. Bowker's.

* * * * *

At the appointed hour, a fan-tailed gas-light revolving between miniature negroes, stopped his progress up the poverty-stricken region of Eagle Street, and looking up—"BOWKER AND CO.'S, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SNUFF WAREHOUSE," figured in gilt capitals above the shop-front, while a further notification of "THE TRADE SUPPLIED," appeared in the window, though the coal-shed, milk shop, pawn-broking, huckstering appearance of the dirty, narrow, irregularly built street, gave a palpable contradiction

to the assertion. Large gilt-lettered barrels were ranged along the walls and floor of the shop, and the lower part of the window was strewed with snuff-boxes, Meerschams, loose cigars, and wooden rolls of tobacco.

* * * * * * * *

"Come in!" exclaimed a female voice, through a sash-door, drawing a green curtain aside, and showing a fire in the little back parlour—as Charles hesitated on seeing the shop empty—"Oh, it's Mr. Stubbs!" continued the voice, and a fat tawdry woman in ringlets and a yellow gauze gown with short sleeves, made her appearance. The pleasure of being recognised in London, was grateful, and Charles readily accepted the lady's invitation to enter and sit down.

"Bill 'ill be here presently," observed she, sweeping a handful of filbert shells off the green baize table cover, and throwing them on to the fire. "Take a glass of brandy," said she handing a tumbler off a side table, and passing the bottle to Charles to help himself and replenish her glass.

"'Ot with? or cold without?" inquired Mrs. Bowker, pointing to a little black kettle singing on the stand on the upper bar of the fire.

Charles took hot with, and so did Mrs. Bowker; and the dancer from the Cobourg coming in, they all had hot together.

* * * * * * * *

"Is Stubbs here?" exclaimed Bowker, bursting into the shop, with his pee-jacket collar up to his ears, and a low-crowned broad-brimmed hat on his head.—"Ah, you rogue!—what, you've found your way to the ladies, have you?" continued he, throwing open the sash-door.—"Well, sorry to interrupt you, but my friend's waiting, so come along and renew your acquaintance here another time. Always happy to see you, you know." Charles bid his fair friends a hasty adieu, and Bowker, thrusting his arm through his, led the way along Eagle Street to the turning down of Dean Street. Under the lamp at the Holborn end, stood a man in shape, make, and dress, exactly the counterpart of Bowker. Low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, pee-jacket up to his ears, pantaloons, and Hessian boots.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting, Sir," said Bowker, in the most respectful tone, as he approached the figure. "Allow me to introduce my friend Mr. Stubbs—Yorkshire gentleman—Mr. Stubbs—Mr. Jorrocks—Mr. Jorrocks—Mr. Stubbs."

Mr. Jorrocks raised his hat, and Mr. Stubbs did the same, and then Bowker offering an arm to each, they proceeded on their way.

High Holborn, what with its carts, coaches, busses, and general traffic, affords little opportunity for conversation, and it was as much as

the trio could do to keep their place on the flags.

"Cross here," observed Mr. Bowker, as they neared the narrower part of the street, and passing under an archway, they suddenly entered upon darkness.

Savage yells, mingled with the worrying, barking, and howling of dogs, issued from the upper part of a building on the right, and Bowker with difficulty made himself heard as he halloed for Slender Billy.

"I 'opes it's all right," observed Mr. Jorrocks, twisting his watch in his fob, and tripping over a heap of something that lay in his way.

"O, all right, I assure you, sir," replied Bowker, tripping up also. "Confound the rascals," continued he, "near as a toucher broke my neck.

"SLENDER, A-HOOI!" roared he, after three or four ineffectual holloas.

"Coming, masters! coming!" exclaimed a voice, and a person appeared on the top of a step-ladder, holding a blacking bottle, with a candle stuck in the neck.

"Come, Billy! come!" exclaimed Mr. Bowker, peevishly, "didn't I tell you to be on the look-out for company, and here you're letting us break our necks in the dark: pretty way to treat gents.: show a light, come!"

Billy, all apologies, tripped down the ladder, and holding the candle low enough to discover

the steps, crawled backwards, followed by Mr. Bowker and his party.

"What's to pay?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks, as he reached the landing, of a forbidding-looking one-eyed hag, sitting in a little curtained corner, partitioned from the scene of action by a frowsy green counterpane.

"O, Mr. Bowker's free here," observed Bill to his gentle wife, drawing aside the curtain, and exhibiting the interior. What a scene presented itself! From the centre of the unceiled hugely rafted roof of a spacious building, hung an iron hoop, stuck round with various lengths of tallow candles, lighting an oval pit, in which two savage bull-dogs were rolling and tearing each other about, under the auspices of their coatless masters, who stood at either end applauding their exertions. A vast concourse of ruffianly spectators occupied the benches rising gradually from the pit towards the rafters, along which some were carelessly stretched, lost in ecstasy at the scene below.

Ponderous draymen, in coloured plush breeches, with their enormous calves clad in dirty white cotton stockings, sat with their red-capp'd heads resting on their hands, or uproariously applauding as their favourite got the turn. Smithfield drovers, with their badges and knotty clubs; huge coated hackney coachmen; coatless butchers' boys; dingy dustmen, with their great sou'-westers; sailors,

with their pipes; and Jews, with oranges, were mingled with Cyprians of the lowest order, dissolute boys, swell pickpockets, and a few simple countrymen. At the far end of the loft, a partition concealed from view, bears, badgers and innumerable bull-dogs; while "gentlemen of the fancy" sat with the great round heads, and glaring eye-balls of others between their knees straining for their turn in the pit. The yells and screams of the spectators, the baying of the dogs, the growling of the bears, the worrying of the combatants, and the appearance of the company, caused a shudder through the frames of Mr. Jorrocks and the Yorkshireman.

A volley of yells and plaudits rent the building, as the white dog pinned the brindled one for the fourteenth time, and the lacerated animal refused to come to the scratch, and as the pit was cleared for a fresh "set-to," Slender Billy, with a mildness of manner contrasting with the rudeness of the scene, passed our party on, and turned out two coal-heavers and a ticket-porter, to place them advantageously near the centre. This was a signal for renewed uproar.

"Make vay for the real swells wot pay!" roared a stentorian voice from the rafters.

"Crikey, it's the Lord Mayor!" responded a shrill one from below.

"Does your mother know your out?" inquired a squeaking voice just behind.

"There's a brace of plummy ones;" exclaimed another, as Bowker and Jorrocks stood up together.

"*Luff*, there! *luff!*" exclaimed Slender Billy, stepping into the centre of the pit, making a sign that had the effect of restoring order on the instant. Three cheers for the Captain, were then called for by some friend of Bowker's, as he opened his pea jacket; and while they were going on, two more bull dogs entered the pit, and the sports were resumed. After several dog-fights, Billy's accomplished daughter lugged in a bear, which Billy fastened by his chain to a ring in the centre of the pit.

"Any gentleman," said he, looking round, "may have a run at this 'ere hanimal for sixpence;" but though many dogs struggled to get at him, they almost all turned tail, on finding themselves solus with Bruin. Those that did seize were speedily disposed of, and the company being satisfied, the bear took his departure, and Billy announced the badger as the next performer.

Slender Billy's boy, a lad of nine years old, had the first run at him, and brought the badger out in his mouth, after which, it was drawn by terriers at so much a run, during which Mr. Jorrocks criticized their performances, and with the aid of Charles Stubbs succeeded in selecting a good one.

But enough of Slender Billy and his bull-dogs —He was a well-known character, but all we

have to do with him, is as the medium of introduction between Mr. Jorrocks and Stubbs—That introduction ripened into intimacy, and many were the excursions* of our friends.

Let not, however, "ingenuous youth," as Mr. Jorrocks would say, rush to the cock pit in hopes of like success—There are many Charles Stubbs' in London—Many youths sent to buffet its difficulties with no better introduction than the chances of a chamber, no further training than that of a Yorkshire school, and no abler monitor than our Yorkshire yeoman—Let them, however, beware of Bowkers and Billys. Thousands are ruined by low acquaintance, for one that is made by a meeting like the present.

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* A volume descriptive of many of these, was published some few years since by SPIERS, Oxford Street:—A third edition, with new illustrations by Alken, will shortly make its appearance from the establishment of Mr. Ackermann, of the Eclipse Sporting Gallery.

END OF VOL. I.

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